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LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE.

SEPTEMBER 1900.

*One of Ourselves.*¹

BY L. B. WALFORD,
AUTHOR OF 'MR. SMITH,' &C.

CHAPTER XXV.

'NO, SIR, NOT THAT WAY.'

IS it late?' said Poll, looking calmly round in answer to a breathless apology. 'I didn't know. Do look here, Bet'—she was hanging over a basin and had what servants term 'a mess' all round her on the table. 'This is such fun; Mary has been teaching me to dry sea-weeds; you wouldn't believe it, but that girl is a perfect genius. She has got a whole book full of them, and you never saw anything more beautifully done. When it got too dark for me to go on drawing I was sitting here, and she came in, and saw ours lying about and—oh, Bet, how wet you are!'

'It is nothing. I will run up and change.'

'You will find a fire in your room. Mrs. Lightfoot came in too, and when she heard you were out in this thick mist she sent Mary to light it. She did, indeed, of her own accord.'

'How nice of her!' said Bet, cordially. 'I am all right, but my clothes are rather penetrated. Shan't be a moment'—running off.

Even Poll, absorbed in her new toy, noticed the run. 'Her walk has done her good,' thought she; 'but I must clear away before she comes back.' And she rang up Mary, and had all out of sight in a trice.

She was to be surprised, however.

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'Now, if you will show me how,' said Bet, coming down with the same quick step. 'I don't mind helping—oh, where is it all gone?'—looking round. 'Is it tea-time? Can it be tea-time?'

'Very much tea-time; aren't you hungry? I am, now that I come to think about it. Why, Bet, you look quite freshened up. I almost wish I had gone out too, but——'

'You were just as well in the house. A sea-fog does not suit you as it does me.'

She looked as if it had suited her. Upstairs she had laughed to herself as she sought to compose the tell-tale sparkle of her eye, the radiant glow which overspread every feature, vowing that she must not stop to think lest thinking should but increase what ought to be concealed; while even now she stood with her back to the lamp, till, the meal being ready, that attitude became untenable.

Tea passed sociably, conversation being kept to the seaweeds, and no sooner was it over than Bet would have the basin out again. 'It is just the thing for to-night,' pronounced she.

'And to-morrow night we shall have some more,' said Poll, well pleased. 'We can collect in the daytime, and——' But Bet heard no more. 'To-morrow night?'

She looked at Poll curiously. Poor Pollkins would be alone to-morrow night, and would not perhaps care about her seaweeds, but she would have something else so startling and exciting to occupy her thoughts that she would not mind.

Some plan must be devised to keep Poll from worrying during the day. 'Oh, you are mixing those two that I kept so carefully apart!'—cried Poll. 'Oh, do be more careful, Bet! Now you have torn it;' reproachfully.

Bet perceived she must attend.

'It won't show, once stuck on to the paper. You see I had not Mary to teach me,' explained she, humbly. 'But, I assure you, it won't show. Now for some more'—plunging both hands into the pile.

'Oh, they are dropping all over the table-cloth!' cried Poll, afresh. 'And I promised Mrs. Lightfoot we would not wet the table-cloth.'

Bet's handkerchief vehemently mopped the table-cloth.

'Suppose you make the paper ready?' was Poll's further suggestion. Paper could not be sprinkled and splashed about.

But it could be snipped and wasted, and had indeed to be

picked up from here, there, and everywhere when the evening was over, and Bet, jumping up as ten o'clock struck, said Mary could sweep up what remained into her dustpan next morning, for she was going to bed and Poll was to go too.

'But you will remember, Bet, these belong to me? They are really all of them *my* seaweeds,' quoth Poll, obeying. Something in the manner of her claim reminded Bet of the 'Billy' who was Poll's 'Billy;' and for the moment she would have liked to say something, some little thing, make some reference to that old, forgotten day, but prudence prevailed. It was too long since a jesting allusion to William Farrell in ever so slight a form had passed for one now to drop easily from her lips.

'You know you can get some for yourself to-morrow,' appended Poll, innocently; and again 'to-morrow' echoed Bet in her heart.

But she fought against a little shiver at the word. To-morrow might be rather a trying day, a hard day to get through—'though why it should be I don't know,' she battled with herself—but, at any rate, long ere it closed, she would be able to explain all, and even Lionel would not blame her.

It was a comfort that Lionel need know nothing till he got this explanation. Poll the simple would be easily satisfied, but Lionel and Georgie would have known the truth, whatever face it wore.

'How nice your room looks!' said Poll, lingering a moment to enjoy the unwonted glow; 'it was good of Mrs. Lightfoot to think of the fire. She is not half such a bad body as she makes out. We had quite a talk this afternoon.'

'And she was nice to you, was she? I am glad of that.'

So Pollkins would have some one to look after her should her day of solitude prove very long and dismal. About five o'clock she would receive the telegram, and how it would electrify her! But Poll loved to be important; it would be something that she knew before the others, and that the task of communicating the news to them was confided to her. 'And of course you can write from Queenstown,' Billy had assured and re-assured his palpitating little bird.

'Well, good-night,' said Poll. 'I'll betake myself to my little dark hole, and think of you here in your splendour. You wouldn't like me to bring along my hair and brush it here?' with a wistful after-thought.

'Bring along your hair! What a regular Georgie speech!'

Bet laughed merrily. 'No, I think we won't brush hair to-night. But, Poll,' hesitating—'Poll, dear, I have been rather bad to you lately. It isn't that I've meant to be; I hadn't anything to blame you for, and I don't want to blame anybody to-night. I have been seeing things a little—differently to-day. Poll, you will tell them——'. She cannot trust herself to proceed, lest the agitation in her tone should be too apparent.

'It's my turn to write to-morrow,' said Poll, not a little flattered; 'I'll tell them anything you like.'

'To-morrow! Don't write to-morrow; there is no need to write to-morrow; I—I haven't got my message ready. Put off till Thursday, Poll, and you shall have a——'. She paused; she longed to say something warm, affectionate, inspiring, but it was impossible, and, turning away with a sigh, she muttered a reiteration of the word 'message,' which was all that reached her sister's ear.

Poll thought of it afterwards; understood it afterwards.

She departed, and Bet was left, she would have said, in peace; but peace when she had so much to think of, so much actually to do? For very multiplicity of thoughts and cares, she must needs sit down to breathe and let in the wild salt air to cool her burning brow.

Perhaps the strongest emotion within her bosom was the passionate delight of beholding her lover vindicated and her faith in him justified. How she had writhed beneath her impotence when day by day appearances multiplied against him, and the shadow of mistrust deepened in every face but her own! Too well did she know how her constancy had been interpreted; and it needed all the fervour of his gratitude, all his admiration and laudation, to rehabilitate her in her own esteem, while yet lowered in that of her brother and sisters.

Now they would see; now they would surely be generous enough to abase themselves freely before her, and make the *amende honorable* to her husband. Her husband? She buried in her hands the burning, blushing cheeks. It would have been strange enough, it would have been happiness enough to have had all cleared up between her and William Farrell, and to have been able to overwhelm the unbelievers with her wonderful news just when all hope seemed at an end; but what would they say to ardour that could not endure the pangs of uncertainty and separation, even for the brief period which he now owned might see his mission accomplished? Once her consent had been won, the

term of banishment had shrunk surprisingly. 'We may be back in a few months, Bet.'

Bet had gaily reminded him of his earlier despair. It had been laid upon the depth, and height, and breadth of his devotion. Months had seemed years when he thought he should have to go alone.

'So that, after all, we may be back again among them all before the spring?' ventured she.

It was quite likely, he said.

That being the case, even Lionel could not blame her for sharing his noble self-banishment, and depriving it of half its terrors.

'It is still dreadfully sad,' he murmured; 'one can't think of it as a pleasure trip—and such a honeymoon for you, my darling! Only one woman in a thousand would have been courageous and self-sacrificing enough to undertake it. I fear your people will blame me.'

'Not when they know all,' said she, confidently.

Bet had a strong vein of romance in her nature, and, unknown to herself, there was now perhaps a secret delight in yielding to persuasions which found an echo within her own breast.

She was about to fly with her lover, as heroines in all ages have flown when Fate was adverse. With him by her side, his presence to support, his smile to cheer, what was she not strong enough to dare?

In the dim grey of early dawn she saw herself stealing forth, a tremulous, quaking, shrinking little figure; but she also saw another form, and that the noblest, the strongest, taking her beneath his protecting care, and every fear vanished.

How different now looked the little bare room with its cheap trumpery, from what it had looked on the night of her arrival! She had hated it then, she loved it now. Perhaps some day she would come back to it, and together they would revisit the scenes of her melancholy wanderings over the barren headlands and along the moaning shore. 'I shall always love the place,' cried she. That same morning she had loathed it.

At five o'clock she was to be ready; a boat left Yarmouth a little after six, by catching which the travellers would be in London some time before the special train for passengers crossing by the *Majestic* started from Euston.

And when, Bet had ventured timidly—when would the—the ceremony take place?

That, it appeared, could easily be arranged during the period of embarkation.

'It will be all right ; you may rely on me,' said he, quickly.

She had also been exhorted to burden herself with but few personal belongings. 'We shall buy the *trousseau* in New York, Bet.'

'Are we stopping in New York ?'

'Long enough for that. You shall have the finest jewels and dresses——'

'Oh, I don't mind—that is, I don't mind much ; of course it will be nice.' She corrected herself, fearful of disappointing him.

'I am very fond of fine things, only——'

'Well ?' said he, curiously.

'Only they seem nothing now,' whispered she, laying her cheek upon his hand.

For a full minute he did not speak.

Then he hurriedly began again ; she was too good, far too good for him, but his life should be devoted to making hers happy ; he would shield her from every harm ; she should never regret that she had given up all for his sake.

'It is such a little give-up,' said she, smiling through her tears.

The prospect of a splendid fresh equipment had, however, its influence upon Bet's surreptitious packing. There was her pretty summer frock, with the old lace at the throat. It had been brought because she had so little else to bring, and there might be some lingering summer yet in the Isle of Wight. Poll would like to have it ; it was crushed back into the drawer. A flowery hat—two hats—were likewise restored to their places ; her plain little straw would be the thing for the voyage, all indeed that she would require. *He* would choose the next she wore.

She packed carefully, however, all necessaries, again and again discarding what had been deemed such from the little hand-bag which contained her all, reflecting that certain treasures, without which she never went anywhere, would be safe with Poll, safe in the dear little home when she returned to claim them.

When all was done, and her hair brushed and plaited for the night, 'Now for Poll,' cried she, thinking Poll would be easily disposed of ; but paper after paper was torn to bits ere the few sentences which were to compose poor Pollkins' mind were finally allowed to stand.

'Please don't mind being alone to-day. I had to go out

early; but you shall hear about it in the afternoon, though it mayn't be till late; so don't worry, but get on with your seaweeds.'

'Shall I tell her not to poke into my room? Or—no, I will leave it so that they may poke if they please,' decided Bet. But it was not without a twinge that she arrayed *débris* upon the toilet table, and scattered about other articles, so that what she had taken would not be missed. 'He was so very particular that no one should know till it was done, and I promised that no one should through me. It was such a little thing to ask,' she consoled herself.

By five o'clock she was at the garden gate.

'Do you know,' said William, as they rattled through the London streets a few hours later, 'that I am afraid I shall have to test your courage a little further yet, my dearest? I would not tell you before, for you had to go through quite enough as it was, but I had letters this morning at my hotel which tell me that we are not off a moment too soon. They are already on the scent. Bet, would you very much mind travelling alone to Liverpool? Let me explain,' he ran on, rapidly. 'I shall be there before you, for I shall be off now, at once, by another train, while you can run down in comfort in the special, which does not start till twelve. If there were any idea that I was likely to be in the special——'

'I see; but could I not go with you by the other train?'

'It would hardly do'—he shook his head; 'that is to say, it would be better, decidedly better, if you could make up your mind for us to travel separately. Of course, I don't wish to press it.'

'I will do it—William.'

'That's my own plucky little girl. You see I can go in a smoker, third-class, and all that sort of thing. You, Bet, must go down in style; here is the fare of your ticket—you must take it, dear; you belong to me now.'

'Not quite yet,' smiled she.

'You will directly. Anyway, you are going to obey orders? That's right. Then here is your passage ticket—I told you I had risked taking it, since if you had refused to go I should simply have torn it up—you had better put it in your purse now. Of course I shall be there awaiting you on the platform, but in case you are asked to show your ticket first, it is as well to have it. Here we are,' glancing out, 'just coming into Euston Station.'

For a few minutes he kept his head out of the window, peering hither and thither, then drew it in again, apparently satisfied. 'In lots of time, Bet; so I shall just dispose of you here, get a porter to put you into the train, and be off. You won't mind?' averting his eyes from her somewhat wistful gaze.

She felt a little frightened. It would be so strange, so lonely without him. From the moment in which she had discerned, through the dim light of struggling dawn, his figure waiting for her at the cottage gate, all nervous trepidations and wavering self-reliance had been soothed to rest; and it was only now, when told that she must again be thrown back upon herself, that her spirits sank a little.

He saw the shadow on her brow, and made haste to dispel it. She was his own affianced bride, the sweetest, fairest treasure, the noblest heart—he had not said the half when he had to go. It would not do to run the risk of missing his train, and it was just about to start.

'From here?' cried she.

'From Euston, to be sure. I fear I have not too much time. How cold it is!' He hastily tied a muffler over his mouth, turned up his collar, and brought his hat down over his eyes. 'You are sure you understand, Bet? The *Majestic* special; that is all you have to say, and look out for me on the platform——' He was hurried, flurried, all the time casting his eyes hither and thither. 'If I could have managed it any other way——'

'Oh, never mind,' said she, bravely.

'In a few hours, and then we shall never part again!' he whispered. '*Auf wiedersehn*—you know what that means? Give me one smile,' he implored.

The next moment it was 'Now, look sharp; time's up!' in accents of imperious command; and making a sign to the porter who was shouldering his portmanteau, William Farrell dashed in front of the man and was lost to sight in the crowd.

'I dare say we shall have a bit of a breeze.' A smart, sociable-looking girl, who was Bet's only fellow-traveller in the comfortable compartment of the *Majestic* special, leaned forward to draw her plaid over her knees, tucked it in, and proceeded: 'I don't mind; do you? Is this your first crossing?'

Bet owned it was.

'Mean to be sick?' said the other, with interest. 'Well, now, I'll tell you a splendid remedy. You can get it on

board. I always do. I've crossed, let me see, a dozen times at least.'

'Have you really? I don't think I should like that.' Bet shuddered a little. 'I don't know much about travelling.'

'But you are going by yourself, I see?'

'Only as far as Liverpool; I am to be met there. Indeed, I wouldn't go alone for worlds.'

'Wouldn't you?' Her companion laughed. 'Now that does seem queer to me. I'd as soon go alone as not—a great deal sooner, unless my companion were to my taste.'

'Well, perhaps,' said Bet, feebly.

It would be as well to start some other subject, she thought. Sociability might degenerate into curiosity, and she was in no mood to parry questions. From the appearance of her companion she argued one of those frank, superficial chatterers who will talk to anybody, given the chance, and was amused by the alert, matter-of-fact air with which she looked about, disposed of her feet upon the cushions, and proceeded to nibble from a chocolate box.

Not to be uncivil, our novice accepted a chocolate; but to munch it with zest and be ready for another when the box was again handed was impossible.

'I say, I believe you are just making yourself ready to be sick as fast as you can,' quoth its owner, good-naturedly. 'Now you take my advice and don't think about it. We are going to cross together, and, as we have got in here together first, we may as well begin by getting to know each other. That is, if you don't object?'

Oh no, Bet did not object. She rather liked the girl, admiring her handsome face and handsome dress, with her general air of well-being and good-humour. Of course a stranger could know nothing to make her suppose advances or any little display of interest unwelcome. Evidently she had no reticence as to her own affairs, and if she could be kept to them would be agreeable company enough; and, besides, she, Bet, might learn a thing or two from Mademoiselle's or Madam's experience. A new idea. Married or single? Which was she?

'Is that what you want to see?' The young lady had taken off her gloves, and Bet's eyes had been caught wandering to the left hand. 'There it is,' proceeded the speaker, laughingly exhibiting a wedding-ring. 'So you see I can travel about all over the world if I have a mind. Perhaps you think I'm an

American?' after a pause, during which Bet had been feeling surreptitiously her little bare third finger, and in her mind's eye beholding the magic circlet placed upon it. Already she had had a private—a very private—rehearsal of the all-important moment. He had produced the ring at the same time that he confessed to the passage ticket. All had been risked. However faint had been the ray of hope within his bosom, 'it was worth,' he cried, 'throwing his all after.' The phrase was enough. Who would have been so cruel as to analyse it?

The smile upon her face deceived Bet's loquacious fellow-traveller. Secure of an auditor, apparently interested and sympathetic, she was now in full tide. 'So you see you can't call me an American, even if I have lived most of my life on the other side. That part of your life doesn't count. I've been over here off and on for a dozen years, and I suppose I know London as well as most people. Not that it has ever done much for me, and I wouldn't care if I never saw its face again,' with a sudden snap of asperity.

'I don't live in London,' said Bet, gently.

'In the country, I suppose? Gracious! I'd rather live in a London slum than that. I can't abide the country. But, after all, America's the place,' continued the fair cosmopolitan, smoothing her muff. 'I've lived about a good deal, and there's no place suits my complaint like it. You wait and see.' No argument was forthcoming. 'You can get along there first-rate. Nobody wants to know too much—not that *I* need mind,' ostentatiously flourishing her left hand. 'A married woman is a married woman anywhere. I suppose you aren't married?' suddenly.

'I am not,' said Bet in a quiet, reserved tone.

The other shook out her lace boa and blew some crumbs from it, for they had lunched together.

'You don't look it; you are too——' She paused, and looked over from top to toe the little figure on the seat opposite, then broke into a laugh. 'I was going to say something rude. I wonder if you'd mind? Of course you are awfully pretty, and all that——'

'Oh, please don't!' Bet flushed to her brow. The impertinence positive and unmistakable revolted her, and that it was not intended for such hardly improved matters.

'What! Do you mind my saying that? Well, I won't say the other, then.' Her companion nodded familiarly. 'Whoever

heard of anyone's minding being called pretty? I suppose you are one of those girls who live in cotton wool, with papa and mamma and the old nurse, family prayers, and a Sunday school at the back door. What, you aren't? Then I bet you've been told you're pretty, and it was all a try-on.'

'I never said I had not been told so.' Suddenly there was a flash of the old Bet. 'But on the part of a mere stranger—— However, I am sure you meant nothing.'

'Of course I meant nothing,' shortly. The two journeyed on in silence.

It was a raw, chill October day, and the moaning wind every now and then rose to a blast that shook the windows of the train. Between showers, however—for rain accompanied the wind—clear views of the flying landscape were obtainable, and one of these afforded a glimpse of an imposing country seat, finely situated in the midst of wooded uplands. It caught the eye of both our fellow-travellers at the same moment, and, as each was secretly feeling a little ashamed and uncomfortable, the opportunity for patching up a peace was a good one.

'That's a nice place,' observed Madam, easily.

'A beautiful place.'

Bet could not say 'a beautiful place' without being reminded of—— But not a word of Ughtred or of Henham in such company.

'Were you ever inside a place of that kind?' Suddenly the girl turned upon her. 'I never was, and I don't mind owning it. All I know of swells and their houses I get at the theatres.'

'At the theatres?'

A new light broke upon Bet. The flippant ease, the friendliness, the commonness—all were explained. She experienced a sensation of immediate relief united to a trifle of curiosity.

An actress? How interesting! She had never before spoken to an actress, and actresses, as everyone knew, were not to be judged by the usual standard. In a few minutes the two were prattling freely.

'Oh yes, I know houses like that,' said Bet, now eager to atone for what was probably incomprehensible in her former demeanour; 'my brother and sister are stopping at one now.'

'That was why they didn't come to see you off?'

'They did not know I was coming. I am to wire to them, and write. They will be quite surprised.' The train was speeding on, and she had regained her cheerfulness. 'You are

expecting to be seen off at Liverpool?' For, thought she, 'It is only fair to show some interest in return.'

'Rather not,' replied the young lady briskly; 'you and I seem to be in the same boat—even before we go on board the *Majestic*,' with a laughing afterthought. 'We are both on our own hook, we had better look after each other. But don't you be afraid. I have sized you pretty well by this time'—Bet started; 'and, as you have been civil to me, I'll be civil to you. You weren't quite sure of me at the first, I could see that; but now that you know I'm on the boards it's all right? Is that it? Don't you make a mistake, though. I never said I was doing anything now. I'm not, and I don't know if I ever shall again. It depends; still, if it makes you like me any the better, I don't mind telling you that there isn't a theatre in London where I'm not known and couldn't get any seat I chose. Is it all right for me to tell you you are pretty now?'

After a while the speaker resumed: 'I've taken rather a fancy to you, may I say that too? And I don't quite understand your being allowed to run about by yourself—'

'But I said I was to be met'—said Bet, panting, tremulous.

'Of course, to be met. Now by whom, I wonder?' She addressed the words to the outer air meditatively. 'Sometimes a girl like you had better not be met. I had better not have been met—once.' There was no evading the steady, searching eyes. 'That's long ago.' A few deep breaths. 'And he married me. As sure as God is above us he married me, though he would be glad to deny it now. I made him do it, my dear; but think what that means, to make a man go through with it whether he wishes or not. To know if he could have had you on any other terms, he would. That's my story. If you——?' It seemed to Bet as though it were another creature talking, a haggard, worn-out creature, with lines about her painted mouth and a deep undertone of misery in her shrill, dauntless accents.

Fascinated, she gazed at and shrank from her. By what strange instinct had this stranger divined enough to bid her act the sybil, warning others from the way her own feet had trod?

'You said you—you——' stammered she, regarding afresh the charmed circlet on her companion's finger.

'Oh, I am; and times are not so bad with me but that they might be worse. I still care a little for that good-for-nothing scoundrel, and can tether him to my side when I choose. Not

only by this,' glancing complacently at the wedding-ring; 'but because I know too much, he has told me too much, he dares not break with me in this country; that is partly why he is flying to another—not altogether, but partly. You are going to meet some one at Liverpool? So am I. I am not expected as you are, but I have this 'Open Sesame'—and here she touched the ring—'while you——?'

'Oh, hush!' said Bet, hoarsely. It was terrible to her to speak, and yet to be the subject of those suspicious glances!

'Does that make it right?' she murmured; 'because—because—I'll tell you, as you seem kind, and in earnest, and I don't want you to think anything bad of me——'

'Not of *you*,' said the other, under her breath.

'I don't know how you came to notice anything, I had dressed myself so quietly'—she caught a glance at her poor little dowdy clothes; it was a remark on these which had been on the tip of the flashy woman's tongue before—'and I did not say anything strange, did I?' struggling to recollect. 'But there is, it is true, there is a friend——'

'Where?'

'He is to be on the platform. There will be time, he says, before we start. The—Registrar's Office is close by.'

There was a long silence. The train was whistling, shrieking, flying along. Outlying portions of the great seaport were visible on every side.

'You see,' said Bet at last, struggling with a vague sense of danger and of terror, 'that all will be quite, quite right directly I have met my friend. He came with me as far as London; we had another journey together first—but there we had to separate because, oh! I can't tell you why'—her lover's strict injunctions to secrecy reverting to her mind—'but it had nothing to do with ourselves, nothing. He is all that is good and noble and——' A sob.

'I doubt it.' The hard-faced woman set her teeth and ground them unknown to Bet. 'Methinks I scent a villain,' muttered she, reverting to some melodrama; 'and yet my hands are so full with my own affairs that how to mix myself up in another——? She calls him "good and noble," the hackneyed phrase; she must have the innocence of a babe to use it. If I could but see him, one look would tell me more than all this child's outpourings.'

'You shall see him,' said Bet, softly, at the moment. It seemed to her that no one could look upon her lover's face and doubt his faith.

Faster and faster they swing along, now amidst the dingy outskirts of the city, now plunging into its very heart, now—'Yes, here we are!' says Bet's companion, in would-be lively accents. 'So, cheer up, my dear, and we shall soon see—stay, though.' Suddenly she snatched and gripped between her own the little hand which hung at Bet's side. 'If anything's wrong, *I'm here*. Look at me, understand me; I'm not a girl like you; I'm an old, old woman, and *I'm here*.'

'Yes, yes, thank you,' said Bet, shrinking a little away.

And though a minute before she had been willing, nay, anxious to subject William Farrell to the keen scrutiny of those black, brilliant eyes, she felt on a sudden that she had been too hasty. William might not like her having made friends with a stranger. She would slip away and be alone when they met, and there would apparently be no difficulty in so doing, since the wharf-side station was full of people awaiting the arrival of the *Majestic* passengers.

Bet was not confused by this. Although inexperienced in many ways, her random youth had given her a certain amount of independence, and she stepped on to the platform with renewed buoyancy, the thought that she was once more to be with *him* overcoming every other.

'Oh, William!'

'Yes, it's all right,' said he, cheerfully. 'Here we are, and I've got it in my pocket,' patting the place. 'In a few minutes we shall be made one for all time, my little girl. You got on all right? Had a pleasant journey down? No bother?'

'Only I was so glad to see you.'

'It was a nuisance having to part company, but it served its purpose. I have been at the place, and the fellow is waiting. I have a cab here too.'

'You thought of everything,' moving proudly by his side.

'It would not have done to forget,' said he. 'My baggage is on board, and, as you have nothing but this bag'—it was in his hand—'we'll be there and back in twenty minutes. Hallo!' to one of the boat's crew, 'you won't be off under an hour, I suppose.'

'Hardly an hour, sir. An easy half-hour, or, maybe, three-quarters.'

'Enough for us.' He turned to her again. 'This way, dear——'

'No, sir, not *that* way.' A voice behind made the pair turn their heads. Were they being addressed?

It was hardly likely, yet an almost imperceptible start shot through the veins of each. The voice was recognised by both.

'Not that way, William Farrell; your way, dear Will, and mine, lies there,' and Bet's fellow-traveller pointed with her finger at the noble liner moored to the dock. A mocking smile wreathed her lips; a cold gleam shone in her eyes.

'So this is your little game, is it, Will? Your last little game, I should say; you have played me many a scurvy trick before, but to run off to America leaving me behind—at least you should have made sure that I did not wish to go, don't you think? It was a mistake to leave me enough money for the passage, anyway. You have made one or two mistakes, dear boy, clever as you are. Not that it signified much my travelling down with your intended wife——' She looked at Bet. 'Good God! you villain!' she cried out, and caught the sinking girl in her arms.

'Poor thing! Can't stand the farewell scene!' whispered some sympathetic bystanders among themselves. 'Seeing people off is always a mistake.'

'William Farrell, you deserve to be damned for this,' proceeded the first speaker. Cool sarcasm had now given place to tones of smothered passion. 'I was sure I had an instinct that something was wrong, but I little thought it was *you*. That you should dare! A girl of this sort! And the farce of a marriage ceremony, when you knew I could be down upon you at any moment—Oho!' Suddenly a new intelligence appeared to strike her. 'That's it, is it? There's more behind, is there? You're giving the old country the slip for ever, so you may as well go the whole hog?' She slipped close up to him and hissed in his ear, 'What about the bank, William?'

With a fresh spasm upon his livid face, with eyes darting fury and despair, he sprang upon her to silence her.

'Keep your distance,' said she, coolly stepping back. 'The bank is nothing to me; I have guessed about *that* for some time past. But I mean to have my share of the loot——'

'Mad woman!' He was writhing in terror so abject that her passion died away, and she resumed her taunting tone. 'It was a shame to try and do your old partner out of her portion of the glorious haul. Glorious it must be, or the game wouldn't have

been worth the candle. For you are giving up a good deal, William, and it must have been a mighty deep hole you had got yourself into——'

'Hold your tongue, you——'

'Ha—ha! He's fairly white over it. My dear—to Bet—' look at your fine gentleman now. He's not pretty, is he? You poor child,' her tone softening, 'if ever I am glad of anything I have done in this world, I am glad I have saved you. You'll bless me for it some day, and if'—in her ear—'if ever you think of a poor wicked woman in your prayers——' She held the shuddering form fast. There was a breathless pause.

Suddenly William Farrell started forward. 'Bet——'

'Hands off! You shan't touch her, you shan't speak to her. If you do——' Her menacing tone and threatening aspect cowed him. He drew back.

'I have but to say the word, and you know what would follow, sir. One little word. Thief—swindler—would-be adulterer, shall I—shall I?'

'You would not, you could not, Geraldine.' He caught her by the wrist. She shook him off angrily.

'Take care. Don't drive me too far.'

'It would be your own ruin as well as mine.'

'That might be, and yet,' she looked at him pitilessly, 'there are times when that seems of no consequence. I could treat you as you have treated me.'

'Hush, for Heaven's sake!'

'For Heaven's sake? No. For your sake and my own. Perhaps. Yes, I calculate I'll keep quiet, William, unless'—again a hard, relentless look—'unless you provoke me to forget. If you don't want to do that, you'll keep a civil tongue in your head. You're afraid of me, sir, and very well you may be; I could take such a revenge on you——' She paused, her eyes dilating, her nostrils expanding. 'It would almost be worth it,' she muttered.

'Now, then, ladies and gentleman, the passengers are going aboard, now, if you please.' A civil official passed by at the moment. 'All passengers on board, please——' His retreating voice died away in the distance.

'Well now, William, you had better make up your mind.' She had regained command of herself and was regarding him as a cat does a mouse. 'If you choose to be under orders, and come along quietly, you can. The play can proceed,' reverting to her actress days. 'But, mind, it depends on yourself. Where you

go, I go. I have stood this sort of things long enough, and from to-day I am Mrs. William Farrell——'

'Damnation! Not that name,' he started, fiercely. 'If you know so much, you might know——'

'To be sure. Give me the password, then, whatever it is, and let us be going.'

'Gray,' said he, mechanically.

'Lead on, Mr. Gray.'

He looked as if he could have struck her, torn her—but durst not defy her. The sweat stood on his brow. He hesitated.

'Obey me,' she said, setting her teeth.

He moved a pace and turned. No one could have called the man a coward, foiled and trapped at every point; it needed all his desperate sense of what a moment's lapse from self-control might bring to force down his will.

'You think you have checkmated me,' he began.

'There's not much thinking in the case. If ever a man was checkmated, if ever a hypocrite was unmasked—but it's a pity there's such a poor audience'—looking half ironically, half sadly, downwards—'only this one miserable little girl. She's hardly worth the scene. Good-bye, my dear,' gently withdrawing her supporting arm from the motionless, benumbed figure; 'don't fret more than you can help, and get back to your friends as fast as you can. Now, Mr. Gray; before me, if you please.'

Like a criminal he slunk before her.

The platform was almost empty, and a young idler who had returned from seeing his friends off, and who perceived that something a little out of the common was going on, drifted nearer as the group broke up.

'It's a deuce of a shame to leave the girl in that state,' thought he. 'She ought to have some one with her. It wasn't a very tender leave-taking neither,' for he had seen that no kisses nor embraces passed. 'Something queer somewhere;' and he glanced curiously and almost resentfully after the retreating couple.

They were visible for more than a minute, the man slouching along with his head down, evidently under the domination of the erect woman behind, whose purple hat and feathers, discernible long after the wearer's form was lost in the crowd, steadily held its way. Neither looked back.

'Cool customers.' The young man shrugged his shoulders.

Then whistling softly under his breath, he took a turn nearer

the hapless derelict left behind, wondering kind-heartedly that nobody should be there to look after her, and wishing that she would go; go away and go home, or at any rate go out of sight, if obliged to wait for the train returning south.

'Can't some of these fools tell her?' muttered he, looking at the groups of porters idly chatting now that their labours were over.

To avoid a sight which made him uncomfortable, the stranger strolled back to the landing-stage, and stood there. The *Majestic* was loosing her ropes, and beginning to swing steadily round, preparatory to feeling her way out of dock. Demonstrations of farewell were taking place betwixt those on board and those on shore.

Ha! There was the purple hat again, and the fellow with her! They were on the upper deck, side by side. Then the man moved quickly away, but the woman followed him. He moved again, and again she was by his side. Our bystander laughed to himself, laughed and backed the woman. 'A white-livered chap, and she has got her claws well into him. Whatever is up, I back the woman,' summed up he, decisively.

A minute later, William Farrell's face suddenly appeared on the lower deck. 'Hallo? Dodged her at last, have you? And if the gangway hadn't been up, you'd have been across it, but it's too late now, sir.' The young man apostrophised the unconscious figure before him with solemn irony. 'Too late, sir. She's got you, and she'll keep you.' With the words, the form of the pursuer emerged to view, and he broke off to see what would happen next.

Like a hawk she pounced upon her prey. It was the last sight anyone in England ever had of either.

'Have you anything to do with that young lady on the platform, sir?' The spectator of the above little drama was turning away when he was respectfully accosted by one of the station officials. 'That young lady left behind, sir? I think perhaps you'd better go to her if she belongs to you.'

'Eh? But she doesn't. Is anything the matter?'

'Seems dazed like. Been saying "Good-bye" or something. There's many of 'em takes it hard, but seeing her all alone——'

At the same moment a wild cry rang with startling suddenness upon their ears. With a look at each other they hurried back, but no Bet was to be seen.

'She was here a minute ago,' said one of a set of men who

had hastened out from various quarters at the sound; 'I noticed her. So did Bill here. We thought she had ought to have some one with her——'

'But where is she now?'

They looked up and down. No one could answer. She was gone.

CHAPTER XXVI.

'DON'T YOU SEE WHAT SHE MEANS?'

A NIGHT of wind had cleared the sky, and next morning broke bright and blue all over the land.

Nowhere is a beautiful autumn morning more beautiful than in the precincts of a fine English country house, or so at least thought a certain young man who gazed from his open window over 'sunny slope and beechen swell,' whose ear drank in the tinkling sheep-bell, the woodpigeon's note—who awoke moreover from a night's sound, refreshing sleep to the prospect of a happy day.

On the previous evening Lionel had given Leonora a rose. He knew nothing of new and approved methods of love-making, but this he did know—that the gift nestled in the bosom of his mistress, and that she blushed when she caught his eyes upon it. With all his modesty he felt himself so near the goal that one step forward was all that was required. To-day he would take that step.

And it almost seemed as if others knew he would; a consciousness was in the air. Every member of the little party, now reduced to its original numbers, looked gay, kind, joyous, expectant; a gentle radiance diffused itself over Leonora's countenance—she trod on air; Lady Blanche forbore to make plans. 'We shall see how the day turns out.' Her nephew's request for commissions from the ladies to be executed by him at the neighbouring town whither he proposed riding—'And I thought of going just as soon as ever I could go, aunt Blanche'—was received graciously by all.

He was a dear boy to think of it. So clever, too. They wanted quite a number of things. No one asked if Lionel would care to ride that morning.

The girls strolled along the terrace. 'Don't go very far, my

dears,' said Lady Blanche; 'we may want to consult by-and-by. We must not waste this charming day.'

They promised to seek her out presently.

Lionel was in the hall as her ladyship passed through on her way to the morning-room, and the rustle of her dress died softly away along the passage. His heart beat a little, because it is not in the nature of hearts to help beating at such moments; but though he affected to be examining some trophies of the chase, and lingered in front of a mighty bear's skin, measuring it with his eye, he did not mean to lose his opportunity.

Lady Blanche was kindness itself; he could not think of her but with the sincerest, deepest gratitude—indeed, she came next to Leonora and his sisters in his affections; an interview with her could not be very formidable.

'And she must know,' thought he.

Still, a lump rose in his throat as, having given the lady five minutes' start by the clock, he gathered up his courage and prepared to follow. He had already advanced a few steps when a side door opened.

But it was only a footman with a telegram on a salver, and Lady Blanche would soon dispose of the telegram; he had been afraid for a moment that Leonora and Georgie were returning.

The telegram was for him.

'I daresay they want me back at the office?' he cogitated, unfastening the envelope. 'It's hardly fair, but I suppose I should have to go.' Aloud: 'No answer; I'll attend to it.'

Attend to it. Yes, but he had other things to attend to first, and this tiresome bit of pink paper, come at such an inopportune moment, should be crushed into his pocket.

'Why does not that boy come?' murmured Lady Blanche, smiling sweetly to herself.

She half rose, thinking she would go to him upon some trivial pretext, and bring him back with her, a willing captive. But she had really done so very much, and after all dear Leonora's dignity had to be thought of.

'He will certainly come;' she nodded to herself, and resumed her seat.

The house was quiet; she could have heard his slightest tap at the door; it made her nervous watching for it. Ten minutes, twenty minutes, half an hour passed; she could stand no more. 'I *must* go and see what he is about,' she said aloud, and went.

'Lionel!' softly at his elbow. He was there, where he had been last seen; he had not foolishly wandered away after the girls, or ensconced himself in the smoking-room. She half repented of her impatience; still, time was passing and she could settle to nothing with this hanging over her. 'Lionel?'

'Yes. Oh, I beg your pardon, Lady Blanche.' He turned hurriedly, thrusting something in his hand out of sight.

'My dear Lionel, I was only going to propose—but what is the matter?' quickly. 'Has anything happened? Have you hurt yourself? Your hand?'—for he was still concealing it behind his back. 'Do tell me at once; I have everything a surgeon could have.'

'Thank you.'

For a few dizzy moments he could think of nothing else to say; then steeled himself. 'A telegram was brought to me just now which requires—immediate attention. If you please, Lady Blanche—if you would be so very good—if I might venture to ask you not to—not to inquire—'

'But, my dear Lionel, you look quite ill. Pray come into the dining-room and let me give you—'

He shook his head.

'What can I do for you?' cried she, tenderly. ('How very unfortunate!' to herself.)

'I must go at once,' said Lionel, with thick, choking utterance. 'My sisters are in trouble and have sent for me. I must go,' he repeated, as if someone were trying to prevent him.

'Certainly you must go.' Lady Blanche advanced to the bell-rope.

'Send word to the stables to have a dog-cart brought round as soon as it can be got ready, Balderston. A quick horse, to go to the station.'

'You see, I speed the parting guest'—she turned as the door shut—'but that guest will return, I hope, directly the difficulty is over. Things often seem at first sight so much blacker than they are, my dear Lionel. I am so very sorry, but telegrams are sometimes worded so unfortunately that they give the very worst impression—'

'Yes, yes; yes, they do.' He caught at this.

'And your sisters are such excitable, dear things, and lean so upon you.'

'I know; I hope it is so. God grant it is so. But I must

make sure. And then there is Georgie,' putting his hand to his forehead.

'That need not trouble you; Georgie remains here, where, I hope, in a few days her brother will rejoin her,' smiling encouragement. 'And a thought strikes me: bring the others too; why not? It is a good opportunity, and we shall rejoice to have them. Then little Georgie's heart need not be troubled with this worry.'

'Oh, Lady Blanche, if I could keep it from her!'

'Certainly keep it from her; she is too young to know everything. When things go wrong it is often best to keep quiet till they right themselves. If they do not right themselves, it is time enough then to tell.'

'You are so good! Such a kind, kind comforter!'

'Will you run up and put your things together, then? I daresay you would prefer doing this yourself, as James would probably muddle, not knowing what to take and what to leave. And as you are only running off for a day or two——'

He clasped her hand in silent gratitude.

And the bright, inspiring tones diffused a measure of hope within his breast. At first the shock had been too awful. A horrible gulf seemed to have opened at his feet, which before had been standing on a carpet bedecked with flowers. He had been overwhelmed, stupefied; but no sooner was he alone than he conned afresh the telegram, in order to try whether it might bear, as Lady Blanche said, an interpretation he had not put upon it.

The words were simple and few: 'Bet is lost. Do come quickly. Poll.' Let us go back to the sender, and see under what conditions they were despatched.

Since coming to Freshwater it had been something of a habit with Bet to rise early and go out before breakfast, so that no surprise was created by her doing so on the present occasion. She had probably gone seaweed hunting, and her lengthened absence meant maintained interest in the new art which had aroused it the night before. So thought Poll; not in so many words, but with an easy mind, which permitted her to eat her breakfast in peace, while looking for the laggard's reappearance at any moment.

She was in the act of setting down the coffee-pot to be kept hot before the fire when Mary stepped in with a slip of paper which she had found pinned to the toilet cover in the bedroom overhead, and upon which she cast the loving eye of curiosity as it was taken from her hand.

'Oh! You can take away, Mary,' said Poll.

'Yes, miss,' said Mary.

So Bet had betaken herself off for the day. Perhaps to prospect in other quarters with a view to a move? There would be no harm in that, though it was odd of Bet to have said nothing. Still, Bet often was odd.

The morning passed off well enough, though it was rather a long morning. Even if Bet were not always the best of companions, she was there, she was about, she was to be got at if wanted. It was dull without her.

In the afternoon it rained, and the belated one was duller still. By four o'clock she was heartily sick of her own company and her solitary occupation. Alack, poor Poll! She could never look at a seaweed afterwards, and hunted up Mrs. Lightfoot in the kitchen.

But Mrs. Lightfoot was busy, and in no mood for conversation—to do her justice, she had no idea of her services in that respect being in any way of special value—and somewhat dismally the young lady retired. She was now idle and doleful, but still not alarmed.

Would she have tea, or wait for Miss Bet? Mary was primitive, and said 'Miss Bet.'

It was agreed that the tea might be laid, and would be a welcome sight when the wanderer returned.

'It's only bringing up another pot, miss,' quoth the obliging handmaiden when at the close of an hour Mrs. Lightfoot could not abear the thought of that poor creature all alone waiting longer, and took upon herself to despatch pot number one.

'Thank you,' said Poll, with a sigh.

But when she had eaten and drunk, there was again nothing to do and no one to speak to.

The shades of evening began to fall, her eyes closed drowsily, there was a soft humming in her ear, and her head sank forward on her breast.

It was dark—pitch dark—when she awoke; and now at last with returning consciousness came the first vague stirrings of alarm. Where *could* Bet be? And what *could* she be doing?

'Yes, Mrs. Lightfoot, she said she would be back in the afternoon,' for it was the landlady's own portentous figure which filled the doorway—'indeed she said so,' whimpered poor Poll, with a suspicion of newly started tears in her voice; 'you can read for

yourself,' holding out the slip of paper pencilled in Bet's handwriting.

'Lor', miss!' A quick eye shot a penetrating glance. 'Well, it ain't for me to say—ahem!'

'Oh, do, do say!' breathlessly.

'*She* ain't comin' back. She's gone. Gone home, I daresay. Hasn't she been mopish ever since she comed—not likin' the place, I take it? Well, she's off, and left you to settle up.'

'Do you think so?' quoth simple Poll.

She was vexed, and yet reassured. It was not quite nice of Bet, but then poor Bet had been tried and fretted of late. Now that she read over the slip of paper afresh it certainly did seem as if the landlady might be right. Bet had gone home, acting on the impulse of the moment, and on the same impulse promised more than she could perform. No word would be received from her before the morning. 'I shall be sure to hear then,' she said.

'Aye, to be sure, miss.'

There was the weary evening to get through, but Mary's company and further tuition in seaweed lore was not accepted; and the latter came back from an exploring expedition to report that the young lady was sitting despondent-like over the fire.

And there she sat till bedtime.

But when she went upstairs and, moved by a sudden fancy, turned first into her sister's room, a deeper shade fell upon her face. Why should Bet have left all her things behind? Why scattered about like this? And what need for going home in haste that would not admit of—hark! what is that? Voices below. She rushed to the little landing—

'Bet, is that you? Bet, oh Bet, is that you?'

But it was not Bet.

'Well, now, haven't you had no letter? Well, now, of course there ain't nothin' the matter, but still——'

'Yes, Mrs. Lightfoot, I am going now. I was on my way to the post-office; I shall telegraph to my brother. I am rather—rather uneasy. She may have been taken ill.' Then all at once, 'Oh, I am so miserable—I am so miserable,' for poor Poll had been awake half the night and crying; 'I am so very, very miserable,' sobbed she.

'You're not thinkin'—she can't have gone too near the cliffs, can she?' hinted the landlady, fingering her apron.

'Oh, oh, oh!' sobbed Poll. It was what she had been thinking herself.

She was exhorted not to 'take on,' not to 'meet trouble half-way,' with divers other salutary and inspiring counsels; but in the end she flew up to the village post office, feeling worse than before.

And Lionel could not be with her for many hours yet! He was thoughtful, and she received word from him before noon that he was on his way; but, oh, the woeful time she had of it waiting and waiting, with every now and again a thrill of hope, a fancied sound only to end in disappointment—always disappointment—with a deadlier chill than before at her heart!

When Lionel arrived one glance was sufficient for him. 'When was it? How was it? Have you no clue to where they went?' he cried, sharply. 'We must not lose a moment——'

'They?' echoed she, bewildered.

'Of course, *they*. Are you a child, Poll? Poor girl, this is dreadful for you,' his voice softened somewhat, 'but we can't waste time to think of that. Tell me as quickly and as clearly as you can, all, everything that has happened, for till I know I can't act. When was she missed? Last night?'

'Yesterday morning.'

'Yesterday morning! Good God! And you never sent word till to-day—a whole day and night?'

'But, dear Lionel, she left this,' producing the well-worn, oft-read little scrap; 'so how could we——?' He was lost in reading and heard no more. When he had finished he turned over the paper, but there was nothing on the other side; he re-read slowly what there was.

'This was to keep you quiet,' he said bitterly.

'But, Lionel—oh, Lionel, that is what Mrs. Lightfoot says. She says such horrid things about Bet being out of sorts and not like herself—as if she knew what Bet's "self" was—and then, and then she goes on about the—the cliffs, and people falling over——'

'Rubbish. The woman is befooling you. She is in his pay.'

'His? Oh, Lionel, what *do* you mean? It is Bet who——'

'Bet and—another. This is no time for innocence,' said he, sternly; for it will have been already perceived that intuition had taught him the truth, and, struggle as he might to adopt Lady Blanche's hopes and theories, the truth it remained with him.

'That devil has got her,' he muttered. 'Blinded us, scattered us, and—got her.'

'Do you mean—Billy?' whispered Poll, scared and yet incredulous. 'Oh no, Lionel; no, indeed, Lionel. We have never seen nor heard anything of Billy since we came to this place, and she was beginning to forget about him. I am sure she was; the very last evening we were together she was quite her old self, exactly her old self as she always was after a storm, so nice and gentle and sorry. She said she had been—bad—to me,' tears again rising at the remembrance, 'and she was going to send a message to you and Georgie——'

'Was that the last evening, the very last?'

'Yes, I never got the message. When we went to bed she took a sash she had out of her drawer and gave it me—for a "make-up," she said. We always do that for make-ups. Oh, Lionel, how could you think Bet could ever do anything wicked? She is so much, so much the best of us. And that dreadful Billy——'

'He set her against us; I am convinced of that. It may have been only maliciousness, to pay us out for seeing through him. We let ourselves in for it; we ought not to have shown our hand so openly—but that's no matter now. If I could think that he is not at the bottom of this——'

'But, Lionel, she is still lost,' for his tone was insensibly less distracted.

'Of course. Poor thing, poor thing; but we can organise a search party. And cheer up, Poll; we may find that—all *may* be explained yet and no harm done. She may have been taken ill at some out-of-the-way place. You know, she has not been well lately, and——'

'If only Mrs. Lightfoot would not go on about the cliffs.'

'Damn the croaking woman. Does she suppose that people go out the first thing in the morning to fall over cliffs? Go out on purpose——?'

'Don't you see—don't you see what she means?'

He looked petrified; he had not thought of that.

'She calls it "falling,"' proceeded poor Poll, in a sobbing whisper; 'but all the time she talks about people who went along the cliffs on purpose to "fall." Oh, Lionel, will you tell her that it couldn't be—it couldn't be *that*?'

His face stiffened as he walked up to the house. Examination and cross-examination of its inmates elicited but little. The

front door had not been unlocked on the previous morning when Mary went down at seven o'clock, but Mary testified that Miss Bet could have gone out by the parlour window if she had had a mind, for she could not say whether it was open or not when she went in to do the room. The young ladies usually went in and out that way, so she gave no thought to it. No step had been heard in the house, and no one had seen Miss Bet go.

'Her bedroom was as it always was of a morning,' blubbered Mary, anxious to be kept going, for once relegated to her pristine obscurity she would hear no more, 'and her bed had been slept in, sir; that I could say for positive. She had on her best pair of boots; the others has holes in them.'

Mary exhausted, her mistress took up the theme. She was sure she had said from the first that miss looked out of sorts. The very night she arrived she wouldn't eat nothing, though there was nice fresh fish.

'Yes, yes,' said Lionel, authoritatively. 'Never mind about that; my sister had not been very well, we know, before she came; but she was better and brighter, it seems, of late; getting quite round again——'

'Dear yes, sir; they was that merry over their seaweeds the last evening——'

'And we went to bed together at ten o'clock,' testified Poll. 'She had a fire in her room——'

'Yes, sir, I had it lit myself—thinking she'd be wet. There was a thick sea-fog outside;' and the dame babbled on.

He little knew how near he was to a clue at the moment. Had he learned that Bet had been out alone for some hours, that she had left the house more than usually dejected and depressed, and returned to it singing and smiling, he might have thought, 'Round this interval the axle turns,' and asked himself, 'What then took place?'

He did muse a moment. 'Was she often out alone?'

'Oh yes,' said Poll, 'she used to go first, and I followed after the post came in. We sometimes got your letters by the afternoon post.'

'Where did she walk?'

'On the downs, or along the shore. She always told me where she would be. Once she went too far—that was when we first came—but she promised not to do it again, and she never did.'

His eye rested on the speaker; he would not say aloud, 'Was she always alone?' but Poll understood.

'Bet always liked solitary walks, Lionel; at least, lately. And she never had anything to do, so it was wearisome for her in the house.'

'The fine sea air was good for her,' chimed in the landlady.

'And you always found her, or were with her?' proceeded Lionel; thinking, 'On the last day, too?'

'It was the only day I did not go out. Because it was rainy and I stayed in to draw. Bet asked me to go with her,' said Poll, meaningly.

The two understood each other.

'Well, I must go out and set about inquiries elsewhere.' Lionel aroused himself from fruitless conjecture. 'She can't have gone home, I suppose?' suddenly.

'That's what I said!' but Poll stayed the speaker's joyful note. 'I did think of that,' she said, sadly, and drew from her pocket an envelope. 'Lionel, I could not wait till you came, so I wired to Simmins and pre-paid the reply. It came just before you did.' She laid it before him. He read, 'No one is arrived.—George Simmins.'

'What had you written?' Lionel turned to Poll.

'Just this. "Has Miss Bet arrived?" I thought if she had, she would forgive me; if not, it would only seem as if she were coming. There was no harm, was there?'

'No, you were right to do it; but this,' laying down the reply, 'cuts off our last hope. Now, I'll go.'

'Where, Lionel?'

But he hurried past.

'He have gone to the police station, miss,' propounded Job's comforter; and Poll rushed out from her presence.

DEAR LADY BLANCHE,—I am afraid it can no longer be kept from poor Georgie that some terrible accident or misfortune has befallen Bet. She went out by herself on Wednesday morning—the day before I was summoned—and has not been seen or heard of since.

'We are making a search for her everywhere, but so far unsuccessfully; and I hardly know how to write it, but the worst is feared. These cliffs are dangerous at certain points, and she was fond of walking by their edge—however, this is only conjecture. We cannot be *sure* of anything. Of course, any better news would be sent you instantly. We have your sympathy, I know, in this awful anxiety, and you will do what you can for poor Georgie.—Yours affectionately,

LIONEL COLVIN.'

Should he say anything about the pencilled scrap on the toilet table? He thought not. He tried to think it was of no consequence, and was enigmatical, misleading. Whatever happened, his sister's fair fame must, if possible, be kept untarnished; and in his heart he felt that the promise of an explanation was hardly compatible with the theory which must be promulgated at all hazards should—should anything be found beneath the cliffs. 'They shall not say she did it,' he groaned within himself.

Curiously enough, he received unsought information which dispelled suspicions that still at times recurred of William Farrell.

A friend had chanced to travel as far as Willesden Junction with the latter on the ill-fated day, and had been charged with a message about a horse. Farrell was going down to the Midlands after a horse for himself, and something had been said of Lionel's wanting one. 'My brother has the very animal for you,' wrote the young man, 'and as Farrell told me I might use his name as my authority for your being on the look-out I just let you know.'

Lionel wrote back thanking him, but he did not buy the horse.

'All the same, it was decent of Billy Farrell to let me know,' observed the artless youth, foiled of his deal. He did not know that Billy Farrell had entered the compartment on purpose, and pleased himself much by the manœuvre.

'It all helps,' thought he. The Midlands and a slow train would not spell Liverpool and a White Star liner on the face of it; while he had so arranged matters at the bank that all would go smoothly on for at least four or five days, by which time, and when the hue and cry had begun, he would be nearing the other shore.

'And then they'll have to summon the partners, and only poor scapegoat Charles is within hail. He'll come up quickly enough—but Tom must take a day or two, and Stephen is at Castle Strome deer-stalking. When they are assembled what can they do? For my part I don't think I see them doing anything—but they might. Stephen has a temper, and fat Tom will pull a monstrous long face. I'm as well out of reach. The bank's done for; the old country's done for so far as I am concerned. And "Mr. Gray" must make a fresh start elsewhere. Pretty young Mrs. Gray will be a great addition to Western society——' But why follow such ruminating further?

Lionel now felt bound in honour to acquit Billy. His heartless

conduct had too probably been the primary cause of what had happened, but a man who flirts and makes his bow is not necessarily an utter scoundrel. 'He'll be shocked when he hears. I daresay, if he had been a marrying man, he might have thought of Bet, but as a comfortable bachelor he shied at the idea. It was our fault not seeing this all along.'

Three, four days passed, and the brother and sister in their terrible position were the objects of compassion to all around them.

There were paragraphs in the papers about the lost young lady; it was impossible to keep them out. Heads were turned and whispers passed when Lionel was met striding hither and thither with a fierce urgency that told its own tale. Poll could not bear to go out of doors.

And sometimes there would come a fisherman to the door of the lodgings. Would the gentleman commission him to watch the tide? He would be willing to give up a day's work, or several days if an arrangement were made, and nobody knew the coast like Tim Taggs or Joe Bulbous.

'Don't you believe a word they says,' warned Mrs. Lightfoot, shrilly. 'My man's the only man as knows this coast.' The harpy was thirsting for her share of the spoil.

'If anyone can bring me any real information,' said Lionel, 'I will pay for it whatever is thought right. I don't mind what. The captain of the Coastguard can say. But I won't encourage humbug.'

So little did he look like encouraging humbug that a small boy who had been hanging round the cottage gate for some time to see the gentleman come out, could scarcely make up his mind to run forward and solicit his attention when the crucial moment came.

'What is it?' said Lionel, curtly. But he halted on perceiving that the urchin was breathlessly in earnest, also apparently unwilling to court observation. 'What have you to say? Sharp and be done with it!'

'Yer'll not tell my grandf'er?'

'Have you anything to tell *me*?'

'There's only me as can tell it, but grandf'er would flay me if he found out. I saw 'em go. What'll yer give me?'

For answer he was seized by the arm and dragged along the road out of sight of curious eyes possibly on the look-out. Then he was let go with a jerk.

'I'm not hurting you. Hold your row. If you keep quiet and tell the truth it'll be the better for you. Now then, say that again,' Lionel loosed him, and set his teeth to hear; 'you saw? What did you see?'

'The two on 'em. Her as you're looking for, and him—a gen'leman like yourself. He come here for her to the gate, an' she come out o' the winder up there,' pointing backwards with his thumb, 'and run down to him, an' they went away together. You may b'lieve me,' cunningly.

'And you have kept this to yourself all this time, you young blackguard?'

'Cos I hadn't no business to be out, an' grandf'er said if he cotched me agin he'd wallop me. He wallops awful, grandf'er does—'

'Get on, you beastly little coward. Tell the truth, or I'll wallop you worse than your grandfather would. Where were you when you saw this, and what were you doing? I don't half believe it,' muttered Lionel, suspiciously.

'Harry Bell and me goes after the nests——'

'There are no nests at this time of year.'

'There's birds.'

'And the birds are worth nothing. You'd best tell the truth when you're about it, or you'll get nothing from me; not a brass farthing.'

'It's apples, then; ' the small reprobate heaved a sigh, and, probably deciding that he had gone too far to retreat, proceeded volubly. 'We has to git them afore it's light; and Harry would ha' been wi' me, but overslep' himself, and so there's no one but me,' triumphantly, 'as can tell anything. I was the other side o' the hedge. I see a gen'leman come along the road with a bag in his hand. He stopped at Mrs. Lightfoot's gate, and stood about a bit, and then the window went open—that one in the verandy—and she came out like a flash. She just run into his arms. There never was a sound, and they went away as quiet as mice.'

'Which way?'

'Up the road. Couldn't tell.'

'Is there a train or boat so early?'

'There is early boats, couldn't say how early. The buses runs for 'em in the summer. They hardly ever run now.'

'And there was nobody about?'

The boy shook his head with emphasis.

'They don't none on 'em know *now*. They talks before me,

an' I says nothing. But when I heard you was sayin' you would give—what'll yer give?' suddenly recurring to his first demand.

Lionel took a sovereign from his purse.

'Describe the gentleman. Think a bit, and describe him to my satisfaction, and you shall have this.'

The boy looked covetously at the sovereign, but hesitated. It might be that he would not describe at all to his interrogator's satisfaction, and did that mean that he would therefore be defrauded of his lawful reward? 'I ain't no hand at describin',' he murmured. 'He was just a gen'leman, and he had a big white thing round his mouth, and he'd a stick and a bag, and he come along smokin'—woa, though,' suddenly stopping to fumble in his ragged trowser pockets; 'he throwed this away when she come out, an' I picked it up to sell to old Ben, but I ha'n't seen him since;' and a half-burnt cigar was produced, wrapped in a bit of silvered paper. 'Found that, too, on the road,' said the small informant, eagerly.

In silence Lionel handed him the sovereign. He recalled that he had seen William Farrell strip silver paper off his cigars.

(To be continued.)

The Women of the Salons.

III. MADEMOISELLE DE LESPINASSE.

WHEN some student of the heart gathers together the love stories of the world, he must not forget the letters of Mademoiselle de Lespinasse.

Mademoiselle lives, and will live, not as the most brilliant and sympathetic leader of the brilliant society of France before the Revolution, not as the mistress of d'Alembert, the confidante of Turgot, or the hostess of the philosophers, the Encyclopædists, and the Academicians, but as the woman who sounded all the depths and shoals of emotion and left behind her a correspondence which is still warm with life and wet with tears—an immortal picture of passion.

Mademoiselle's beginning is like her ending—like her youth and her womanhood—a storm. The mother who bears her in shame and secrecy weeps over her and loves her with that un-governed affection which can bring nothing but misery. She is baptised in a false name—entered, with an exact duplicity which deceives nobody, in the baptismal register dated Lyons, 1732, as the legitimate daughter of the Sieur Claude Lespinasse, *bourgeois*, and Julie Navare. Her real mother, the Comtesse d'Albon, though she can't own her as her child, takes the little creature not the less to her home in the old manor house of Avanches, where she is living apart from her husband. The little Julie has as companion the eight-year-old Camille, the Comtesse's son and heir. Is it safe to suppose that the children—equally innocent though not equally fortunate—play together happily for a while? or must one rather think that that passionate and restless nature which is to ruin an older Mademoiselle Lespinasse makes even her childhood wayward, fretful, and unsatisfied?

She speaks many years after of her mother's affection for her, of the impulsive and sorrowful tenderness which tries to make up to the child for that fatal stain on her birth—for the future which

such a beginning must bring. The little girl is surely still very young when she finds out that there is some difference—a fatal difference, which a child feels all the more because it cannot understand—between her brother and herself. The Comtesse ‘heaps her with benefits.’ She educates her herself with an ‘excellent education.’ She does everything in her power to make wrong come right.

Mademoiselle is sixteen years old when her mother dies and leaves her, worse than an orphan, to the tender mercies of the world.

It is from this time the girl dates all her sorrows. But they begin earlier. They begin with herself. When she looks round her condition is deplorable enough. The considerable sum the Comtesse has left her she has given, with an impulsive generosity quite unwise and characteristic, to Camille. Perhaps she reflects he has more right to it than she has—or never reflects at all. She finds herself almost a beggar. She has indeed brilliant talents, but not the talents that earn a livelihood in any time, and certainly not in her time. She is very quick, bright, and impetuous. Not a person for a subordinate position, this. She has grown up into a tall slip of a girl, not at all pretty, but with something even now in her face beside which beauty leaves one cold. She is so impressionable, so sensitive, a brilliant creature with her nerves so highly strung and her heart so warm, rebellious and imprudent, that one does not need to be very clever to guess that when the Marquise de Vichy Chamrond (the Comtesse’s legitimate daughter and Julie’s senior by many years) offers her a home in her house, where she is to teach her little boys, and by no means forget she has no legal right to call her sister, the situation will be wholly impossible. But Julie has no choice but to take it. Perhaps she does not know as yet that the Marquise, though more than kin, is less than kind. And she has herself such a charming sympathetic affection for children! ‘They have so many graces, so much tenderness, so much nature,’ she writes long after. She takes those small nephews to her heart at once, and when she has long parted from their parents in anger and bitterness remembers the little boys with a fond affection.

The Vichy Chamronds have a great house on the Loire. They naturally don’t want this brilliant poor relation. They show her that they don’t want her. But they are afraid of letting her go elsewhere. If she is generous, they are not. They are suspicious of her ridiculous liberality to Camille. Does she want to thrust herself in among them and claim her mother’s name? They accuse her, very likely, of subterfuge and meanness of which their

hearts are capable but not hers. How she bears that galling servitude for five years is a marvel. 'I could tell you things from my own experience,' says she, looking back at this period of her life, 'that you will not find in the wildest romances of Prévost or of Richardson . . . and that would give you a horror of the human species.' In every utterance of Mademoiselle's one must allow for exaggeration. Her emotions are always at fever heat, and her language as undisciplined as her nature. But it remains a fact that she has decided to leave her only home and enter a convent, when Madame du Deffand, the sister of the Marquis, comes to the house for a long summer visit.

Mademoiselle falls in love immediately with this brilliant old woman, and Madame falls in love with her. They are both so clever, so impulsive, so romantic! The delightfulness of their sudden fine scheme of living together is only heightened by the Vichy Chamronds' opposition. Madame is threatened with blindness, and really needs a companion. No one ever appeals to Julie's sympathies in vain. She has never in her life been anything so dull as judicious or far-seeing, and has the warmest heart in the world. She can't but feel, too, that for her any change must be for the better.

A few days before her final rupture with the Vichy Chamronds she receives Madame du Deffand's written proposal that she shall live with her in Paris. She goes to Lyons and exists somehow on the 'cent écus' which is her whole fortune while the final arrangements are being made, the objections of Camille and the Vichy Chamronds being overcome, and Madame du Deffand trying to be cool and judicial and discuss the matter soberly with her friends. One can fancy the delights, fears, hopes, rising in Mademoiselle's heart. She is now twenty-two years old. The girl, who feels within herself a power and brilliancy not given to one woman in a thousand, is to be the companion of the mistress of one of the most famous Salons in Paris, and to associate daily with the most accomplished society in the world. What is there left to desire?

The history of that *ménage* in the Convent St. Joseph is from the first not a little strange. All the wit of the wittiest capital in Europe gathers round two women, one of whom is old and blind and the other an obscure and nameless dependent, who has neither beauty nor fame. Madame rises very late, and receives after nine o'clock at night. Mademoiselle has her little chamber 'de derrière.' Here in her many solitary hours she cultivates her

mind, with Locke, Tacitus, Montesquieu, Montaigne, Racine, La Fontaine, Voltaire; reads and re-reads and reads once more her dearest Richardson and the inimitable Prévost; and cultivates a boundless enthusiasm for Rousseau. When is it that the men whom to know is a liberal education first discover that Mademoiselle is something better even than a divinely sympathetic listener? When is it that Mademoiselle first begins to neglect her duty to her benefactress, and forget that she is here to please Madame rather than Madame's friends? There is no woman in the world perhaps who would be superior to the delight of subjugating, by a charm which has no need of beauty, such men as Turgot, Marmontel, Hénault, and d'Alembert. Or if there is such a woman, it is certainly not Mademoiselle. These men meet her soon upon equal terms. Between five and six o'clock in the evening Mademoiselle holds in that famous little chamber 'de derrière' her own Salon, composed of Madame's adherents, and while Madame sleeps.

She has lived with her employer ten years—and deceived her how many there is no means of finding out—when one day the Marquise, waking earlier than usual, comes to Mademoiselle's room and discovers all.

One can picture the scene very well. Here are Hénault, who has been the old woman's lover, and d'Alembert, who has been as her son—the pride, joy, tenderness, of her age. Here is the company who once hung on *her* words, who sought inspiration from *her* lips, and found in *her* sympathy sufficient. And in their midst, with light in her eyes, ardour and animation on her face, is Mademoiselle de Lespinasse.

This is, as it must needs be, the end of all things.

The two women reproach each other bitterly. Mademoiselle is not a little hysterical. She takes enough opium to ruin her nerves for the rest of her life, and to make her fancy herself dying. When Madame comes to her bedside, 'Il est trop tard,' says the Lespinasse, with her tragic instinct. It *is* too late for any reconciliation to be possible. The older and wiser woman recognises that from the first. Mademoiselle takes rooms not very far from the Convent St. Joseph, and once more faces the world alone.

It is during those ten years that the influence which is to mould and then shatter her life has first come to her. Mademoiselle falls in love. It is said that a certain Irishman who visits at Madame du Deffand's is her earliest passion. It may be so. But it is un-

doubtedly a fact that for the last seven years of her residence with the Marquise she is attached to d'Alembert. How can they help caring for each other? There is so much to draw them together. They are both, writes d'Alembert, without parents, without relatives, and from their birth have experienced neglect, suffering, injustice. D'Alembert, too, is one of the most celebrated men of his age, already a member of the Academy of Sciences, of the *Académie Française*, and to be before long its perpetual secretary and the recognised chief of the Encyclopædists. And he is also, it may be added, one of those inconsequent, sensitive geniuses, as little able to look after himself as a child, and with the same appeal that a child has to a woman's heart. Mademoiselle must be in her early twenties when they first meet.

Que de défauts elle a, cette jeunesse !
On l'aime avec ces défauts-là !

quotes d'Alembert long after, looking back at this spring-time. She loves him with that *abandon* and that passionate sincerity which make her love irresistible. The rooms she has taken are too far from the house where he lodges for her impetuosity. She endures the separation for something less than a year. Then d'Alembert falls ill. Mademoiselle flings prudence to the winds for ever, goes to him in the hotel in the Boulevard du Temple, nurses him back to health, and brings him home with her.

From this point one must not look into her history for any such dull steadfast things as self-restraint, honour, decency. The torrent of her passions seizes her and sweeps her to ruin. She is not designedly bad. She is not designedly anything. Her impulses and desires are her rudder, and her shipwreck none the less disastrous for that.

Writing of the early days of this *ménage*, Mademoiselle says that her happiness frightens her.

There seem indeed—suppose one leaves out duty and conscience, and this pair leave them out quite comfortably—to be but few drawbacks. Only David Hume, the historian, passing through Paris and coming to see them, speaks bluntly of Mademoiselle by a name which she deserves too well. The rest of her acquaintance with that careful self-deceit which is so damning a characteristic of the age, conveniently accepts the intimacy as perfectly innocent, and visits Mademoiselle exactly as before.

It is a little while before d'Alembert joins her, and in the year 1764, that she opens her Salon in her little rooms in the Rue de

Belle Chasse. She is now thirty-two years old. She is certainly not more beautiful than she was as a girl. If the emotions age, she must look greatly older than she is. She has known so many ! But her face, that never was young, has a thousand varying expressions to describe her soul, and her heart, which is never old, such warm enthusiasms, such generous indignations, and such an abundance of life and feeling, as, says one of her lovers, would make marble sensitive and matter think.

Her gatherings can hardly need the additional attraction of a d'Alembert even. Those who come presently to see him, stay to listen to her. The chief of all the Encyclopædists, and the most brilliant talker of his age, may be well content to be second to the woman who but a little while ago was nobody and nothing, and who now, by the power of her mind and the charm of her nature, has all witty Paris at her feet.

It is extraordinary to think that this woman, or any woman, can command such an assemblage almost every night for nearly twelve years. She does not even give the little suppers that help Madame du Deffand's Mondays, or the little dinners of Madame Geoffrin. Should she by any chance go into the country or to the theatre, all Paris knows beforehand. Before five she receives her intimates—listens, as only Mademoiselle can listen, to Turgot's plans of reform, or to the hopes of Chastellux for his coming election. After five all the world is admitted.

The meanest *habitués* of this Salon are the flower of intellectual France of the eighteenth century. Here come courtiers, philosophers, soldiers, churchmen. Here are Bernardin de St. Pierre and La Harpe. Here one listens to those splendid theories on humanity and the Rights of Men which, put into practice, end in the Terror. Here are evolved some of the principles of that Revolution which is to destroy first of all the class who evolve them. Here one reads aloud the last play and the latest poem. One may be grave or gay as one chooses. There is all the good in the world, thinks Mademoiselle, in a little mirth and lightness. She holds in her slight hands the threads of a dozen widely differing conversations, and has the supreme gift of being to every one exactly what he wishes her to be.

Can't one fancy her, very tall and slight, moving through the crowded rooms with her little dog at her side, stopping to speak now to this man and now to that, with her heart always in what she says, a little impetuous in speech, keenly sensitive to the lightest change in the social atmosphere, very natural, very

animated, very quick? When people talk to her they never feel how clever she is, but how clever they are. It is Guibert who says of her that she seems to know the secret of all characters and the measure of every one's mind.

Is it some fine scheme for the good of the people this group are discussing? It must be, by the upturned face, eager and tender, with which Mademoiselle listens to them. She moves in a few minutes to another little *coterie* which is philosophic or metaphysical perhaps; and Mademoiselle has a passion for abstruse thought. Over here they are talking music, or art. The woman of whom it is said that she can appreciate perfectly, each in its degree, a Rubens or the little dead bird of Houdon, the famous painter on enamel, brings into this conversation, as she brings into all conversations, the warmth of human emotions and the vivid charm of her inimitable personality. Her contemporaries unite in speaking of her, as hostess and friend, with such a glow of enthusiasm that after more than a hundred years one still feels for her something of the passion they did.

It is in 1767, and only three years after she has given herself to d'Alembert, that Mademoiselle falls violently in love—with the Marquis de Mora. The Marquis is Spanish, ardent, chivalrous, and five-and-twenty. Mademoiselle is ten years older. But what does that matter? Passion has no age, and, it may be added, no sense of humour. With the Southern blood of de Mora on the one side, and the vehemence of Mademoiselle on the other, it would be vain to expect self-restraint from either of them. The peaceful d'Alembert is quickly swept aside by the rush of their feelings. His only use soon is to listen to the story—though not all the story—of Mademoiselle's devotion to his rival. When de Mora comes back from Ferney, where he has been visiting Voltaire, she flings herself into his arms with a delirious self-abandonment. The fever of this attachment lasts for five years, during which Mademoiselle never knows a rational moment. Then de Mora, with the seeds of a fatal complaint already within him, has to go back to Spain.

They part in an agony of despair. It is d'Alembert who fetches his rival's letters, and brings them to Mademoiselle directly she is awake. And it is to d'Alembert that she leaves as a legacy her papers containing the history of the episode and the certain proofs of her faithlessness to him.

What a pitiful story it is! One is hardly surprised to hear that Mademoiselle does not wait for de Mora's death to betray

him in his turn. Before that news reaches her Guibert is her lover, and the first wild hours of a new passion have robbed her of the last tattered shreds of her self-respect. Guibert is soldier, author, philosopher—the man of whom Voltaire says ‘qu’il veut aller à la gloire par tous les chemins.’

It is in her own Salon Mademoiselle has first met him. He is known to every one by his ‘*Essai sur la Tactique*’ and his military feats in Corsica; and half the women in Paris listen, worshipping, while he reads aloud his new tragedy, ‘*Le Connétable de Bourbon*.’ With his connection with Mademoiselle begins the correspondence by which she lives.

The letters are from the first, a cry. The mental attitude of the woman who writes them to Guibert, from the house of d’Alembert, and in terms of an ecstatic devotion for de Mora, may well baffle the student of human nature. Yet there is not a page of Mademoiselle’s wild outbursts which does not bear upon it the undeniable stamp of a vehement sincerity. Her attachment to d’Alembert has no doubt cooled before this into friendship. But her very first letter unites a headlong devotion to Guibert with a passionate love for de Mora and a wild remorse for the fatality (Mademoiselle calls it a fatality) that made her false to him. It is not too much to say that of these letters there is not one quiet, sane, or prudent. Though they are written in that purest French in which Mademoiselle thinks and talks, they are in no sense a literary composition. They are only the bared heart of that unhappy woman who says of herself, ‘*Mon Dieu! que la passion m’est naturelle, et que la raison m’est étrangère!*’

Guibert is travelling in Germany when she begins writing to him, not because he is obliged to travel, but because he prefers it apparently to being in Paris with her. She writes to him constantly. She is never quite sure of him, as it were. Does she remember too often for her peace that she is forty years old, and has neither beauty nor innocence to give him? Her letters are full of devotion, indeed; but then they are full too of self-reproach—and of M. de Mora. This woman has no subtlety. If it needs art to keep her lover, she will not keep him. The thought of him is with her always. While her passions last, they are meat, drink, air, light, life to her. Even in her Salon—‘*From the moment one loves,*’ she says, ‘*success becomes a weariness. A-t-on besoin de plaire quand on est aimée?*’ The emotions of the last years have already begun to undermine her health. She is thinner and paler and older-looking now than ever. With d’Alembert she is

not a little difficult and capricious—full of those impatient imperfections which first make him love her and keep him weakly faithful to the end. She has known Guibert but a very little while when the inevitable punishment of such a connection falls, as always, upon the woman. The excess of her devotion bores him. He must have a little recreation, after all. There is a certain Monsieur de Courcelles—with a daughter. One knows the end of that story.

Mademoiselle receives it, not the less, with a shriek. One can see her face, wild, haggard, and despairing, through the reproaches she writes him. ‘You have made me know all the torments of the damned,’ she says; ‘repentance, hatred, jealousy, remorse, self-contempt.’ And Guibert answers to tell her of that other person, ‘pretty, gentle, sensitive, who loves me and whom I am created to love.’ There is no cruelty so complete and so selfish as the cruelty of a great happiness.

On September 23, 1775, Mademoiselle writes to Guibert: ‘Perhaps one never consoles oneself for great humiliations. I wish that your marriage shall make you as happy as it has made me wretched;’ and then, ‘You are married; you have loved, love, will love, one whose brightness and strength of feeling have long endeared her to you; that is in order, nature, duty; and who would trouble your joy with questionings must be fool indeed. Quand une fois le fil de la vérité a été rompu, il ne faut pas le rajouter; cela va toujours mal.’

Her health is by now utterly broken and wretched. It is her part to stand by and watch the happiness which has ruined hers. She is long past pride, past dignity, past honour. She goes on writing constantly to the man who has abandoned her, conscious that she wearies and burdens him—bitter in her reproaches and her self-reproach—and contemptuous of the wasted love she is not noble enough to hide. Her body is racked by cough and fever. But the soul which frets it to decay has the brilliancy of the last flame. She still receives her friends, has still that tender interest, that perfect understanding, that divine sympathy which are hers alone. She is in bed all day sometimes, with her misery soothed by opium, and gets up at night to listen to this man’s hopes of a noble future, to splendid enthusiasms which are to redeem the world. One last flicker of self-respect comes to her before she dies. She will no longer ask Guibert to come and see her. Sickness and sorrow are so dull! ‘Point de sacrifice, mon ami; les malades repoussent les efforts; ils leur font si peu!’

She would not be Mademoiselle if that resolution lasted and her pride triumphed over her passion to the end.

She asks d'Alembert's pardon before she dies. But the last words she writes are to Guibert : ' Adieu, mon ami. Si jamais je revenois à la vie, j'aimerois encore à l'employer à vous aimer ; mais il n'y a plus de temps.'

Before such a tragedy as this life one may well pause. What is this woman ? A sinner. But if there ever was a sinner in the world unmeet for compassion, it is not Mademoiselle de Lespinasse.

She says of herself with a bitter truth that everything is against her. Her birth of shame gives to her, as to too many other creatures so born, a fatal heritage of vehement passions, without the strength to control them. Her upbringing does not help her. Injustice maddens her. Her splendid mental gifts bring her under the potent charm of those specious philosophies which are enthusiastic for a virtue more than half confused with vice, and of philosophers who appear to think that so long as they talk finely they may live contemptibly. Her quick impulses and 'the most inflammable imagination since Sappho' lead her to deeper ruin. She is capable of remorse, and not of amendment ; of noble ideas, without the steadfastness to carry them into action. She is the ship without ballast ; without compass ; without chart ; tossed by every wild gust of feeling ; no anchor ; no port to make for ; and at the helm, no guide.

She points, indeed, her own moral. She sells her soul for happiness, and gains fever, wretchedness, and despair. Her passions hide, even from her dreams, that better love in whose serene depths are mirrored peace, honour, and content ; faithful affection for husband and children ; the quiet striving after all things great ; a noble life ; and a happy death. D'Alembert, for whom she has long ceased to care, is true to her ; de Mora dies ; Guibert is false (his fine 'Éloge d'Éliza' rings as hollow as d'Alembert's 'Lament' rings true.) Her letters are only so many witnesses to her tragedy. It is she who speaks of 'cette maladie si lente et si cruelle qu'on nomme la vie.' 'I have proved the truth of what Rousseau says : "There are moments in life which have neither words nor tears."' 'How misery concentrates ! One wants so little when one has lost all.' 'Diderot is right ; it is only the unhappy who know how to love ;' and 'To love and be loved is the happiness of heaven ; when one has known it and lost it, there remains but to die.'

She stands out, in brief, as one of the saddest instances in

history of the disaster that must needs ensue where the paramount idea of life is not duty—that duty which can make the most unfortunate passion not all ignoble, and teach one to build on the ruins of one's own hopes a temple meet for the gods.

She stands out, too, as one of the most extraordinary social figures of the most remarkable social epoch the world has seen. She rises from nothing. She has no money. ('It is only the bored and the stupid who need to be rich,' says she.) She has very bad health; and her lover, though he speaks of her as having that in her face beside which beauty is a 'cold perfection,' speaks not the less frankly of her *laideur*. Yet as long as the Salon is remembered, so long will be remembered the woman who ruled hers by the power of exquisite sympathy and the most womanly genius that ever woman had. And so long as there exist unrequited or misplaced affection, sin, suffering, and disappointment, so long will the letters of Mademoiselle de Lespinasse make their appeal to the heart.

S. G. TALLENTYRE.

Kingship in the Nineteenth Century.

THE history of monarchy presents one illustration, among many, of the dangers of political prophecy. 'I think it impossible,' said Rousseau about one hundred and fifty years ago, 'that the great monarchies of Europe have still long to last;' an opinion that was very confidently held by many thinkers in the revolutionary age in the throes of which the eighteenth century ended. It was a widely spread belief that a social and political millennium was at hand, when the world, enlightened by the advancing orb of reason, would emerge from superstition, and the people would rid themselves of princes and govern for themselves. Never perhaps in modern times was the monarchical principle assailed with such bitter animosity. 'The farce of monarchy and aristocracy,' said Thomas Paine, 'is in all countries following that of chivalry, and Mr. Burke is dressing for the funeral. Let them pass quietly to the tomb of all other follies, and the mourners be comforted.' More than a hundred years have gone by since these contemptuous words were uttered, and yet, except in one conspicuous instance, the prediction has turned out to be wrong. Even considerably later there have not been wanting similar confident assertions; as when Mazzini, who was sometimes carried off his feet by the gusts of his democratic zeal, declared roundly that monarchy was a corpse. Yet already this year we have been forcibly reminded that monarchy is a very living institution. The Emperor William II. signalled the first day of what he calls the New Century by an address to his troops—'the nation under arms'—couched in the language with which the world is now familiar, and by pressing his demands for the increase of the navy. 'When one of this world wants something, the pen will not do it unless it is supported by the strength of the sword,' were the words that closed his speech, and they are even more characteristic of the quoter than of King Frederick William I. who originally uttered them. Again, the Czar on the

Russian New Year's Day issued a rescript to Count Muravieff, his Foreign Minister, in which he praised him for the fidelity and zeal with which he had carried out the imperial will. Lastly, the Emperor Francis-Joseph, at a reception of the Austro-Hungarian Delegations, made use of a convenient opportunity to rebuke Dr. Stransky, an over-zealous Czech, and to declare that where the army was concerned he was irresistibly determined to allow no question of race to impair its discipline or efficiency. It may, indeed, be said that the Emperor William, the Czar, and the Emperor Francis-Joseph have each a customary manner of manifesting to their subjects that they intend their personal authority to prevail. The first makes a speech, the second pens a rescript, and the third publicly engages some prominent man in conversation, the drift of which he takes care should be reported. Each mode is probably the best suited for the conditions of the State in which it is used ; but it is the substance, not the form, that is important. For men are thereby reminded of the fact that in this democratic age the monarchical principle is stronger than is commonly supposed. Yet the status of kingship, and men's conceptions of it, have undergone great changes, and it will perhaps be of some interest to consider in what direction those changes tend to move, with especial regard to their development during the century that is now coming to a close.

It is noteworthy, in the first place, that the number of monarchies in Europe has during the present century increased ; for, contrary to what might have been expected, none of the newly created States—Greece, Belgium, Servia, Bulgaria, or Roumania—are republican in form. Nor in any of the great monarchies, except in France, has revolution in the long run succeeded. The old kingdom of Hungary has been revived ; and if the kingdom of Naples has gone, it has been merged into that of Sardinia. Many impotent grand duchies of semi-royal rank in Germany and Italy have disappeared, but they did not count for much ; so that it may be said that the principle of monarchy has, numerically speaking, tended to prevail. Yet it seems impossible to doubt that the gain has been accompanied by some loss, and that what may be called the basis of monarchy has been almost entirely reconstructed. It is, indeed, a matter of not a little interest to observe how the old beliefs, upon which kingship was originally founded, have been gradually corroded by the advances of rationalism and of popular enlightenment ; and how

they have been replaced by new reasonings of a more satisfying kind.

How the belief in the divine right of kings—their former source of so much strength—arose in modern Europe, where the titles of dynasties have been so constantly disputed, it is very difficult to say; but the fact that it prevailed over so many disintegrating influences down to quite recent times, if even now it can be said to be extinct, is a signal proof of its tenacity and power.

Kings' titles commonly begin by force,
Which time wears off and mellows into right.

These words of Dryden are almost a literally true description of the general course of history, and yet for centuries the belief in the divinity of kings was not only popular, but the notion was constantly invoked by philosophers and politicians of the absolutist type. Perhaps at all times the apotheosis of princes has been a mental process congenial to mankind; otherwise it would be difficult to imagine how the Romans could ever have deified a group of emperors who were either maddened by lust or deeply tainted with insanity. When a Roman emperor died, the funeral rites were ended by letting fly an eagle to symbolise his flight to heaven; but the remark of Vespasian on his death-bed that he felt that he was being turned into a god—*ut puto deus fio*—has a touch of sardonic humour which suggests that to a robust mind such as his the idea was essentially absurd. Yet it is probably from this deification of the Roman emperors that the subsequent belief in the sacredness of kingship may be at least partially derived. At any rate, when after a long period of darkness and confusion there emerged that wonderful institution, the Holy Roman Empire, the old tradition of the sacrosanct emperors was not forgotten. It is not difficult to see how the chief of an Empire, that loomed large in men's imaginations as the secular side of the visible Church, became encircled, as it were, in a halo of divinity. Nor to those who wished to believe was there wanting what could readily be taken to be the warranty of Scripture—such as the anointing of Saul, the command to render tribute unto Cæsar, and the exhortation of St. Paul to obey the higher powers. The belief, however, in the divine character of the chiefs of the Holy Roman Empire was not long confined to them, for out of policy or jealousy the attribute was very quickly arrogated by other sovereigns also, a piece of usurpation in which they were

eagerly supported by their subjects, who felt themselves flattered by the glorification of their kings. Such titles as 'Most Christian King,' 'Defender of the Faith,' 'Apostolic Majesty,' and others, which in these days seem grotesque, were adopted as symbols of divinity. There were even philosophers like Filmer who tried to support the belief upon rationalistic grounds. But it derived its greatest force from what was nothing less than a gross and singular superstition—that kings possessed a miraculous power of curing scrofulous patients with their touch. Perhaps the first historical case of the ascription of the power was that of Edward the Confessor, who for his saintly character was thought to be endowed with many kinds of wonder-working attributes. At any rate, by the sixteenth century the superstition was very widely spread, and it is impossible to doubt that, both in England and in France, the reports of the cures effected—told, as they were, with much circumstantial detail—went far to prop the thrones of the Stewarts and the Bourbons. Perhaps there is no similar case in a history of a mere superstition that has had such far-reaching political effects. Readers of Shakespeare will remember how he attributes, no doubt out of compliment to James I., the possession of the power to Duncan, King of Scotland.

How he solicits heaven,
Himself best knows ; but strangely visited people,
All swoln and ulcerous, pitiful to the eye,
The mere despair of surgery, he cures,
Hanging a golden stamp about their necks,
Put on with holy fingers : and 'tis spoken,
To the succeeding royalty he leaves
The healing benediction.

James I., the least kingly of all kings that it is possible to imagine, carefully fostered the belief, and the miraculous touch was ascribed without question to all the Stewart dynasty. In the case of Charles I. marvellous properties were attributed to his blood. So deeply rooted, indeed, was the belief in the royal touch, that even Swift was not entirely free from it, and it is common knowledge that one of Dr. Johnson's earliest recollections was his being taken to Court to be touched by Queen Anne. With the accession of the House of Hanover the practice was dropped, and in England the belief slowly died away ; but while it lasted it was something more than a curious phase of thought, and its political results were exceedingly important. The title of

the Stewart dynasty was not only very far from perfect, but its character was often very far from regal. It is hard to conceive of James I. as, to use an Homeric description of a king, 'a foster-ling of Zeus.' But a mere superstition went far to sustain and keep alive the faith in the divine right during times when the monarchical principle might have been irretrievably impaired. During the period of the Commonwealth the following inscription was placed upon a statue of Charles I. that stood at the Royal Exchange: *Exit tyrannus, Regum ultimus*. Yet the creed of the sacred character of kings survived the storm, and in the time of Charles II. it was perhaps stronger than before.

The belief in the divine right not only supported the Stewart House in England, in spite of its follies and its crimes, but it also served the Bourbon dynasty in France. Even Bossuet, magnificent genius though he was, regarded Louis XIV. as little less than God on earth, just as he conceived of God as a kind of Louis XIV. in heaven. The *Grand Monarque*, indeed, 'pontificated,' so to speak, in a manner that was impressive and sublime. But during the eighteenth century the doctrine of the divine right was slowly sapped and undermined. Even the thinkers thought it necessary to attack it. Defoe in his pamphlet *De Jure Divino*, and Locke in his *Treatise on Government*, both brought their artillery to bear upon it; and even Bolingbroke, Tory though he was, treated it with scorn. And so did Hume. In France it quickly fell beneath the blows of the philosophers, and when the French Revolution burst, their criticism had fully done its work. Small indeed was the support that the hapless Louis XVI. and his queen derived from any lingering belief in the divinity of their office. So that when the nineteenth century dawned, it may be said without exaggeration that the idea of the divine right survived in England and France only in the minds of the ignorant and unlettered population. For the French Revolution, with all its horrible excesses, did at least breathe a new spirit and fresh impulses into the world; it came, as Sainte-Beuve says, like the Law from Sinai, amid thunder and lightning; it cleared the air of many fond and foolish notions; it was a great expanding, clarifying, and stimulating force, though Frenchmen have with a pardonable bias perhaps valued it too highly. 'Don't speak ill of my dear Revolution,' said M. Thiers on one occasion; and he was typical of many of his race. Among other beliefs that the Revolution tossed into the lumber-room of exploded superstitions was that of the divinity of kings. But traditions die hard, and this one has

even yet at least partially survived. Moreover, it was too useful to be totally abandoned. In the so-called Holy Alliance, the work mainly of a religious mystic, the Czar Alexander, there are evident traces of it. And when Napoleon dragged the Pope to Notre-Dame and ordered him to crown him, he wished, we may be sure, to invest his usurpation with some degree of sanctity. At the Restoration the advantages of reviving the tradition were too obvious to be neglected, and Louis XVIII., at heart a cultivated sceptic, was punctilious in maintaining that the grace of God was his title to the throne. Charles X. went even further, for at his coronation at Rheims in 1824 he touched no fewer than one hundred and twenty-one persons for the scrofula, the last historical instance upon record of that superstitious practice. The Revolution of July which brought Louis-Philippe to the throne gave the final blow in France to the belief in the divinity of kings, for the citizen king was the very incarnation of the constitutional monarch; he was, he solemnly declared, the passionate servant of the principles of 1793. In the elder branch of the Bourbon dynasty, it is true, the old belief was fondly cherished, and the Comte de Chambord with his devout imaginings was just the type of man to foster it. Handsome, but entirely ineffective, it was said of him that his head was a palace, with no room in it furnished but the chapel. At any rate, so far as the principle of legitimacy is concerned in France, he may be said to have cast the last clod upon its coffin. France has during the nineteenth century experienced three types of monarchy, that by divine right, that by right of the strongest, and that by right of the people, and she has ended, for the present at any rate, in declining to try the experiment of any of them again.

But it is among the Germans, in whom a vein of mysticism and romance is blent with a good deal of practical shrewdness and sagacity, that the creed of the divinity of kings still lingers longest. King Frederick-William IV. of Prussia, for instance, held it very strongly; he declared that he would never allow a sheet of paper in the form of a constitution to come between him and his people; he was, says Bismarck, 'a religious absolutist with a divine vocation,' who kept 'a mediæval wardrobe in which he dressed up his fancies.' Even the old Emperor William I. clung to the idea. But it was left to his grandson to assert it on every opportunity in its most uncompromising form, and to publicly declare himself

the figure of God's majesty,
His captain, steward, deputy-elect.

The sacred character of the trust imposed upon him is an idea to which he constantly recurs in his very numerous speeches; nor will it be easily forgotten how Prince Henry of Prussia made famous his departure to China by assuring the Emperor that he was going to preach abroad *the gospel of his Majesty's Sacred Person*. That was a declaration which astounded even the stoutest defenders of the throne. That the Kaiser, who, like Disraeli's Mr. Vavasour, lives in a perpetual 'gyration of energetic curiosity,' has some of the elements of greatness, it is impossible to deny. His conceptions are spacious, his utterance is large, he has the *facultas loquendi imperatoria* ascribed to Julius Cæsar. But when a well-known Liberal professor, Dr. Quidde, a few years ago published a monograph on Caligula and the insanity of the Roman emperors, it was easy for those who could read between the lines to see that a satire was intended. Nor can it be denied that the Kaiser gives just ground of uneasiness to the more thoughtful of his subjects. It, however, lies beyond our province to estimate his character; it concerns us only to consider his own view of his imperial functions and position. And of that he has left us in no doubt. In January last Count Ballestrem, the President of the Reichstag, at a dinner that he gave upon the Emperor's birthday, made an interesting speech, in which he eulogised his sovereign in very striking terms. 'He sets up,' he said, 'an intellectual standard which can be seen from afar . . . in the intellectual sphere he has adopted an attitude towards every question.' And then the Count went on to relate a remark of the Emperor's let drop in conversation: 'I live in an epoch of publicity, of the spoken word, and at the same time *I do not want to be a so-called constitutional monarch who reigns but does not govern.*' The words let in a flood of light upon the Emperor's inmost thoughts. That he should believe himself to be invested by Providence with a kind of sacred trust is not perhaps surprising; but that he should deliberately aspire to play the rôle of absolutist over one of the most intellectual nations in the world is almost past belief.

The history of monarchy within the nineteenth century might appear from the examples we have cited to be distinctly one of growing strength; yet, if we look beneath the surface, it may be doubted whether appearances do not deceive. For it is certain that most of the props upon which kingship used to rest have, so to speak, been knocked away. The belief in the divinity of kings,

the German Emperor notwithstanding, has almost vanished. As a political institution, monarchy is stripped of its adventitious trappings, and stands simply on its merits; it has become, in a word, a mere question of expediency. From this point of view its position has been certainly much weakened. Formerly it was possible for monarchs to derive an immense amount of strength from an outward show of splendour; for Lord Halifax's estimate of monarchy was nearer the truth in his own time than in a more critical age it has become. 'It is,' he said, 'liked by the people for the bells and tinsel, the outward pomp and gildings; and there must be milk for babes, since the greatest part of mankind are and ever will be included in that list.' The royal robes must often have concealed a multitude of sins, and those who were revered as great personages were in truth very little persons. Nor is this all. If a king were happily endowed by nature, he could achieve much by sheer force of physical bearing and deportment. Louis XIV. is an instance to the point. Though not in any sense a great man, he possessed to perfection the art of playing the king; there was something majestic about him; he had the regal air, the βασιλικόν τι that Dr. Johnson ascribed to Agamemnon. He would, St. Simon tells us, have been every inch a king even if he had been born under the roof of a beggar; there was in him, said Mazarin, the making of four kings and one good man. Now it is probably safe to say that the phenomenon of a Louis XIV. is most unlikely to recur; for, even if the man appeared, the spirit of the age would not endure him. Again, with the decline in the belief of the divinity of kings, much of the old intense feeling of personal loyalty that was almost a religion must tend to disappear; such loyalty, we mean, as that of the 'incomparable' Falkland, that figure so gracious, so prodigal of soul, who in the flower of manhood fell fighting for a cause which he knew was doomed to failure. We can scarcely hope to see his like again. There are few more pathetic things in history than the wonderful disinterestedness with which royalists have devoted lives and fortunes to princes who have too often proved unworthy of their love.

For loyalty is still the same,
Whether it win or lose the game;
True as the dial to the sun,
Although it be not shined upon.

True it is that when a sovereign exercises by force of integrity

of character a great influence for good, a strong sense of loyalty may even now animate a people, as all subjects of the Queen have the happiness to know. Still, upon the whole, the age of loyalty, if not gone like that of chivalry, must certainly be waning, for a monarch is in these days apt to be regarded not so much as a man of flesh and blood as the incarnation of a political principle. So regarded, he is not likely to pluck allegiance from men's hearts. There are, on the other hand, in constitutional monarchies certain elements of strength that may compensate kings for the loss of absolute prerogatives. A strong ruler, indeed, may move uneasily in fetters, but the maxim that the king can do no wrong must prove a buttress to a weak one. When Charles II. heard the famous epigram upon himself that he never said a foolish thing and never did a wise one, he neatly turned the tables on his critics by replying: 'Quite true: my words are my own; my acts are those of my ministers.' Even in his time the principle of ministerial responsibility was beginning to be realised. It is also advantageous to a monarch to submit to some degree of criticism in Parliament and in the press; as Bismarck said, it saves him from 'the danger of having blinkers put on him by women, courtiers, sycophants, and visionaries.' In a word, constitutional monarchy may be described as a device for turning average men into tolerable kings; and as a good despot is in truth 'a happy accident,' the constitutional principle may preserve to kingship a longer lease of life than was at one time thought possible. Bismarck, to be sure, once expressed a fear that, though royalists might not be wanting, the supply of kings might fail, and it is certainly curious to reflect how narrow is the source from which the dynasties of Europe are drawn. Germany has been truly described as the nursery of princes, and there is scarcely a royal house in Europe in which there is not a strong Teutonic strain. But the contingency is too remote to be seriously considered. Moreover, men's experience of republics has not so far been such as to dispose them to exchange constitutional kingship for what may at the best turn out to be a very doubtful gain. For between presidents and constitutional kings the difference is less real than apparent. Thomas Jefferson, the third American President, was such a stickler for republican simplicity that he scandalised society by receiving ambassadors in his slippers; but he was a remarkable exception. A president as a rule rather likes to ape the splendour of a court, though he rarely does it with success. The French Royalists, for instance, must have derived no little merriment from the *maladroit* attempts of the late

M. Faure to maintain a dignity that did not sit easily upon him. Even the old plea of economy has now but little force. The argument that kings are too expensive often used to be invoked.

Others thought kings a useless heavy load,
Who cost too much and did too little good.
These were for laying honest David by,
On principles of pure good husbandry.

These lines of Dryden's satire contain the thought compressed; but the modern experience of republics has taught the lesson that a president and a king are, where a parliament holds the purse-strings, upon a level from the financial point of view; for, as Hobbes very acutely remarked, 'whereas the favourites of monarchs are few, the favourites of an assembly are many; and the kindred much more numerous than of any monarch.' So that perhaps it may in conclusion be said that though the principle of kingship has, in spite of some manifestations of absolutism, lost much of its original source of strength, yet it is being refounded upon so strong a basis of practical utility, that it seems as likely as ever to endure, shorn somewhat of its splendour, and in an attenuated shape. For nowhere in Europe, outside Russia, can the words *l'état c'est moi* be said to represent a working rule of kingship; not even in Germany, where it may safely be predicted that the Emperor William will have to abate his pretensions. Monarchy in the grand style has probably gone for ever. 'A talented king,' said Thomas Paine, 'is worse than a fool, and a dumb idol better than one animated.' That is a strongly expressed but exaggerated statement of the position of those who hold that a king should reign but not govern, but the position is one which seems likely to be generally accepted. Here at least we may trace one of the results of the nineteenth century of the history of Europe.

C. B. ROYLANCE KENT.

Becky and Bithey.

NO pleasanter place than Mrs. Meatyard's dairy was to be found at any hour of the summer's day; but it was a busy place too. At early dawn the clatter of bright cans and the lowing of cows in the adjacent yard announced milking time, and men came staggering in with great foaming pails of milk, and poured it, sweet and warm, into the shallow tins prepared for it. A little later mistress and maid alike were busy skimming the thick folds of last night's cream. On churning days the regular *splash, splash* in the outer milkhouse was the forerunner of the pleasant labour of butter-making. On cheese days the huge vat had to be filled with gallons and gallons of milk, and then the rennet carefully measured out, and then Mrs. Meatyard and Rebecca took it in turns to 'work' the curds; and what with this working, and putting the curds into presses, and running off the whey, and cleaning up afterwards, a body, as Rebecca frequently said, would be better off with four pair of hands nor with one.

Nevertheless there was something cheerful and delightful even to the workers about the bustle and stir—the sight of the rich milk, the faintly sour smell of the curds, the pure sweet air that circled round hot faces through the wide-open door, the little shifting lights and shades that played about shining tins and whitewashed walls as the branches of the trees that surrounded the house were set dancing in the wind. Yes, Thorncombe Dairy was a pleasant place, and never more so than on this particular June afternoon, when the roses outside the milkhouse door were in full bloom, and the sweet odours of the old-fashioned flowers in the borders beneath the windows came floating in to mingle with the homelier scents within.

Mrs. Meatyard had duly 'cleaned herself' and changed her dress, and now, with the cuffs of her stuff gown turned up, was delicately enswathing roll after roll of golden butter in small squares of gauze, and packing them when thus protected in

baskets ready for to-morrow's market. Old Rebecca was busy at the other end with scrubbing-brush and pail, 'swilling down' the shelves. Her spare form was encased in a somewhat faded cotton garment, the sleeves of which were rolled up high; the sparse wisps of her grey hair were ruffled and untidy, but her ruddy wrinkled old face was cheery and good-tempered, and she crooned a song to herself as she scrubbed the boards.

In the outer milkhouse one of the labourers was also at work cleaning up, hissing as he used the broom as though he were rubbing down a horse, and every now and then making a great clatter with the piled-up cans.

Through the open door the imposing form of the 'master' could be seen leaning over the gate which opened into the farm-yard, contemplating the operations of two of the farm hands who were engaged in cleaning an outhouse. On the cobble-stones near his feet pigeons were strutting up and down, bowing and cooing; a little group of calves lay sunning themselves in a corner of the yard, flapping their ears and waving their tails as the flies teased them. Cocks and hens were crowing and clucking, pigs were grunting, sheep and lambs in the pasture behind the house were bleating, bees in the lime-blossom were humming, and throughout all the din of outdoor life Rebecca's quavering voice could be plainly heard:

' For Do'set dear
Then gi'e woone cheer;
D 'ye hear? Woone cheer.'

But louder even than her ditty sounded all at once a shrill tuneful whistle, and the head of a young man came presently in sight, moving rapidly along the irregular line of hedge that divided the farm premises from the lane, and presently the owner of the head rounded the corner and entered the yard.

'Tis you, Charl'?' observed Farmer Meatyard, without removing his pipe from his mouth. 'You be come in nice time to fetch cows up.'

'Jist what I was a-thinkin',' said Charl'. 'I was kept a bit longer in town nor I looked for, but I did hear sich a funny bit o' noos.'

'Did 'ee now?' inquired his father, much interested.

'Ees, I do 'low I did. That there new show as they be all a-talkin' about—the Agricultural Show they calls it—ye wouldn't never think what they be goin' to give a prize for.'

'Why, I did hear, all sarts,' returned the father a trifle impatiently. 'Horses and cattle and pigs, and cheese and butter—all they kind o' things. There baint nothin' so very wonderful i' that. 'Tis much same as other shows—voolish work, I reckon it. Ye mid have the best harse, or the best milkin' cow in the countryside, and yet they wouldn't give en a prize. Nay, they'd sooner gi'e it to some strange beast from Bourne or Templecombe or some sich place.'

'Well, but ye haven't heard my tale yet,' cried the son. 'Jist you try to guess the last thing as I've heard they be a-goin' to give a prize for. 'Tis somethin' livin'—I'll tell 'ee that much, and it isn't neither a harse nor a cow, nor a pig, nor anything as ye'd think likely.'

'A bull?' suggested Farmer Meatyard, who was not an imaginative man.

'Nay now; when I said a cow I meant male or faymale. It baint nothin' o' that kind, nor yet cocks and hens. Ye'll never guess—'tis the queerest thing! Call mother, and let her see if she can have a shot at it.'

'Come here, Missus!' shouted the farmer excitedly. 'Come here and give your opinion. Here's Charl' come back from town, and he do say they be a-goin' to give a prize at this 'ere noo Show as is a-comin' off next month for summat altogether out o' the common. 'Tis alive, he says, but 'tis neither bird nor beast as I can hear of.'

'Wait a bit,' said Mrs. Meatyard, folding her hands at her waist, and looking out of the rose-framed milkhouse door with placid interest. 'Nay, now—I have it! Bees!'

'No. Bless you, mother, there baint nothing wonderful nor yet funny about bees.'

'Dear heart alive, what a tease the lad be! Is it a handsome thing, Charl', or an uncommon thing?'

''Tis neither one nor t'other,' replied Charl', exploding with laughter. 'There, I'd best tell you, for you'd never guess. 'Tis a wold 'ooman.'

'Ah, get away, do!' growled his father, much disgusted. 'Don't 'ee go for to tell I sich cock-and-bull stories. A wold 'ooman—who'd go for to give a prize for sich as that?'

''Tis true, though,' retorted Charl'; 'twas in every one's mouth. A prize, they do say, will be given for the woldest faymale farm servant.'

'Well, to be sure,' ejaculated his mother, 'I've heard o' prizes

bein' give for the finest baby, and somebody did tell I once about a prize bein' give for the beautifullest young girl, but I never did hear o' givin' prizes for ould folks.'

'Tisn't raysonable, I don't think,' commented her lord. 'Nay, it do seem a foolish kind o' notion. Why, if they do go encouragin' o' the wold hags that way, they'll live for ever!'

'I shouldn't wonder,' cried Mrs. Meatyard, disregarding him, 'if our Rebecca didn't have so good a chance as any one. She's a good age, Rebecca is. Ah, I shouldn't wonder a bit if Rebecca was to get it. I think she is the oldest woman in these parts, without it's Mr. Sharp's Bithey.'

'Becky!' screamed Charl' ecstatically. 'Becky! Come here a minute. I've brought some good news for 'ee.'

Becky came to the door, wiping her soapy arms with her coarse apron, and smiling pleasantly if toothlessly at the young man, who was a favourite with her.

'Becky,' cried he, 'how would 'ee like for to win a prize at the new Show what's to be given in the Royal George's grounds next month? There, mother thinks you have got so good a chance as any one.'

'I did hear as they was a-goin' to give a prize for butter,' said Rebecca; 'but all as comes out of this 'ere house be Missus's makin'. I wasn't never no great hand at it. Nay, I can milk and skim and churn right enough; but I haven't Missus's hand on butter.'

'It bain't the butter prize as I mean,' cried Charl'. 'They be a-goin' to give a prize for the woldest 'ooman-servant. I heerd it wi' my own ears, and the prize is to be a butter-dish, and you've just so good a right to it, Becky, as any other! Better! For I don't believe there's sich another old witch in the country.'

'Ye're an impident chap, Charl',' cried Rebecca, somewhat offended. 'I don't want to listen to sich a pack of rubbish! There, I've ha' got summat else to do. Ye mid keep a civil tongue in ye're head, I think. Witch, says he! Tell him to go and drive cows up, Master, else we shan't get through with our work this day.'

'I'll go and drive cows up right enough,' said the youth; 'but ye needn't be so highy-tighty, Beck! 'Tis truth as I be a-tellin' 'ee. Every one be a-talkin' of it in town.'

'Dear, to be sure!' ejaculated Rebecca, partially convinced, but looking to her mistress for confirmation of the strange statement.

'It do seem queer,' returned Mrs. Meatyard; 'but it's true, Becky; and as I was a-sayin', I think you ought to try for it. You be turned seventy, bain't you?'

'I reckon I must be,' said the old woman, ruminating. 'My hair have been white this twenty year and more, d'ye see; and I haven't a tooth in my head. I must be a tremenjious age, sure!'

'Tis a bit hard to tell wi' such as you, Beck,' remarked Farmer Meatyard, contemplating her thoughtfully. 'You do seem to be sich a dried-up wold stick—ah, and have been so ever since I knowed ye. Ye've never looked a bit different since ye come to this 'ere village. How long ago was that, can ye mind?'

'Well, now, 'tis a bit hard to reckon, Master—one year do seem so like another, and the days do follow each other so fast. I lived down at Childe Okeford till I were thirty year of age, and then when mother died I went to service, and I were ten year or thereabouts at a farm Shillingstone way, and eight year at a public, and fifteen year at another farm a mile out of Sturminster—I think 'twas fifteen year, but it mid ha' been eighteen—and then I've bin here the rest of the time.'

'An' that must be twelve year or more,' put in her mistress, 'for I can call to mind as Charl' there was only just breeched when you did come.'

'Why, woman, you must be comin' on for eighty,' cried the farmer, half admiringly, half disapprovingly. 'Bless me, ye haven't no business to be alive at all.'

'He, he!' chuckled Becky. 'Here I be, ye see, sir; and if there's to be a prize for wold folks, I shouldn't wonder I did get it.'

'I can't call to mind anybody else in these parts as can beat ye if your tale be true,' returned he, 'unless it's Mr. Sharp's Bithey. *She* be a wonderful age, now—I shouldn't wonder if she's turned her fourscore.'

'Lard, no, sir!' cried Rebecca, with a sudden cessation of her laughter, while a flush began to mount in her shrivelled cheeks. 'Bithey! Why, she's no age at all to speak on. She've ha' got very near all her teeth, and her hair—what there is of it, they do say, is as black as can be under that wold woolly net as she do wear. She don't come up to my age, Master!'

'She runs you very near though, Beck,' cried mischievous Charl', beginning to caper with glee. 'She's oncommon hard o' hearin', and she do get the rheumatiz so bad in her j'int's. Ther' be times, Mr. Sharp do say, as she can scarce walk.'

'Pooh!' cried Rebecca, with fine scorn, 'what signifies that? A child mid get rheumatiz, and I've ha' knowed folks so young as Missus be hard o' hearin'! That don't prove nothin'. There, I must give over talkin' here, and get back to my work.'

She retired, muttering to herself and shaking her head, while Charl', still chuckling, went off to fetch the cows.

He came back in a state of explosive excitement, and immediately called his parents out of hearing of Rebecca, who had stalked loftily past him, armed with stool and pail.

'You'll never guess what I've been doin',' he began. 'Jist as I was crossin' the lane down yonder, who should I see but wold Bithey toddlin' along in front of me; so I hollers after her, and tells her all about the prize, and did advise her to go in for it, and the wold body is that set up about it 'tis as good as a play. She makes sure she is goin' to win it, and thinks nothin' at all o' poor Beck's chance. Lard, 'twill be rare sport to set the two wold folks one again t'other.'

The father laughed jovially, but the mother inquired in an aggrieved tone why he had interfered and lessened poor Rebecca's chance.

'There, she've a-been that excited all the evenin', thinkin' about it—she'll be awful disappointed if she don't get the prize. Besides, I can't but think 'twould ha' been a kind o' honour for we if she was to win it.'

'Maybe she will, all the same,' said Charl'. 'I don't believe Bithey's half so old myself.'

And he went away to do his share of the milking.

The news soon spread all over the village that both Rebecca and Bithey intended to compete for this strange new-fangled prize that was to be given at the forthcoming show, and opinions were pretty evenly divided as to the respective merits of the two aspirants, but much amusement was caused by the seriousness and pertinacity with which each old lady advanced her claims.

On the Sunday following Charl' mischievously brought the rivals into contact by calling back Rebecca just as she had haughtily walked past Bithey on leaving church.

'Come here, Beck, for one minute. Here's Bithey won't believe you are any older nor her.'

Rebecca turned, eyeing Tabitha up and down somewhat disdainfully.

'Ye may believe it or not, as ye please,' she said, 'but you was a little maid goin' to school when I was out in service.'

'What does she say?' inquired Tabitha, turning to one of the bystanders, for quite a little crowd had gathered round the two.

'She says you are no age at all worth countin',' bawled Charl'. 'She 'lows you be quite a little maid still.'

'Little maid, indeed!' retorted Bithey. 'I know I must be seventy if I'm a day, and I'm a'most sure I'm a good bit more nor that. Why, I be gettin' that weak in the limbs I can scarce get about.'

'Anybody mid get weak in the limbs!' cried Rebecca wrathfully. 'Tisn't no sign of age, that isn't. When I did come to live at Thorncombe Farm, twelve or fifteen year ago, I was a staid body, as anybody mid see; but you—you was quite fresh and well-lookin'. I can mind it well. You did come up to our place for a bit o' lard soon arter I did get there, and you was as straight and as active and as smooth and chuffy in the face——'

'Dear, dear! however can ye go for to tell sich tales, Rebecca?' groaned Bithey, much scandalised. 'I can mind that day so well as you, and I can mind as you did offer to carry the lard for me as far as the gate, for, says you, "You do look mortal tired for sure," says you; "and 'tis a long way to carry it, and you not bein' so young as you was."'

'Oh, faith, Becky, the case is goin' again' you!' shouted Charl'. 'If ye said that, it shows plain as you was treatin' Bithey respectful like, you bein' the youngest.'

'God forgive you, Bithey!' ejaculated the dairywoman. 'Have you no conscience at all? I say sich a thing! I offer to carry lard for you! 'Twas never my way to go in for payin' compliments to folks, and I'd always plenty to do wi'out makin' out more work for myself.'

'Come, come,' cried a fat good-natured man who had drawn near, 'don't be fallin' out on a Sunday! There must be some way of tellin' your ages. Let's see how far back you can remember, and maybe that'll tell us summat. Can ye mind when Rectory chimbley was blowed down? I were a little chap myself then, but I can remember it.'

'Nay, that was afore my day,' said Becky, much crestfallen. 'I've only been here a matter of twelve or fifteen year.'

'I can mind it!' cried Bithey eagerly. 'I can mind it so well as if it were yesterday. I had my sampler in my hand, and when my mother did call out I run the needle very nigh an inch into my finger.'

'Then you was a little gurl, for sure!' exclaimed Rebecca triumphantly. 'Ye must ha' been quite a young maid, else ye wouldn't ha' been workin' on a sampler. What year was that, Mr. Joyce?'

'Let's see,' said Mr. Joyce meditatively. '"Twas in the year '48, I think—'ees, I'm very near sure 'twas '48.'

'An' say you was ten years old then, Bithey,' went on the other claimant, with increasing animation, 'say you was ten or twelve—you couldn't ha' been much more, else you'd ha' had more sense nor to be workin' samplers—well, 'tis but a little over fifty year ago—that 'ud leave ye not much more nor sixty. Ye haven't wore so very well, I d'low; but there, 'tis plain sixty's your age.'

'I feel sure I'm a deal more nor sixty,' protested Bithey, almost in tears. 'There, now I think on't, 'twasn't when Rectory chimbley was blowed down as I did run needle into my finger; 'twas when Mr. Sharp's roof took fire. Can you mind when Mr. Sharp's thatch took fire, Mr. Joyce?'

'Nay, nay, 'twas long afore my time.'

'An' *you* must be comin' on about sixty, Mr. Joyce?'

'Ah, I fancy that's about my age.'

Tabitha cast a look of triumph towards Rebecca, who feigned unconsciousness.

'I can mind the time o' the Crimee war,' she announced deliberately.

There was a chorus of derisive comment.

'The Crimean war! Why, that's scarce any time ago,' said Mr. Joyce. '"Twas in the fifties, I think; 'ees, I can remember the time very well myself. That don't go for to prove nothin', Rebecca.'

'Well, there's one comfort,' returned she, undaunted, 'us'll be judged by folks as don't know us one from t'other, and they'll be like to judge us fair. There be things for and against both on us. Bithey's hard o' hearin' and wonderful stiff in her j'int's, and all that'll be in her favour; but if they do go for to judge us wold women same way as they do judge harses, I reckon I've ha' got the best chance.'

'How's that?' cried Charl'.

'Why, if they go for to examine our teeth, to be sure, they'd see as I han't got none.'

And further demonstrating the fact by a wide smile, Rebecca walked away, followed by a burst of mirthful applause.

On the eventful morning of the Show all the inhabitants of Thorncombe Farm assembled to see Rebecca start. Charl' was to drive her to the town, for, as he explained, it would never do for her to let on she was hearty enough to walk such a distance.

'If I was you, Beck,' he added, 'I'd make out to have a bit of a limp. 'Twould go far to make ye even'er like wi' Bithey.'

'Nay,' returned Rebecca stoutly, 'I was never one for makin' out what wasn't true.'

'Smooth down your hair a bit under your bonnet,' advised Mrs. Meatyard anxiously. 'It mid be any colour tucked away like that.'

As this injunction could be obeyed without detriment to her principles, the old woman pushed back her bonnet and pulled into greater prominence her scanty snowy side-locks. Then she climbed into the cart, with a palpitating heart, and sat clutching at her umbrella while they jogged out of the yard, and down the green lane, and out on the dusty high-road.

Mr. and Mrs. Meatyard did not make their appearance at the Show till the afternoon, when most of the judging was over, and only that important part of the programme which related to various feats of horsemanship remained to be carried out.

'Let's hunt up Becky afore we go to look at the jumpin',' said the farmer to his wife, as they passed through the turnstile and threaded their way amid the various stalls and pens containing exhibits from all parts of the neighbourhood. Here, a beautiful little red Devon cow thrust a moist protesting nose through the railings; there, a sturdy black-faced ram made abortive butts with his curled horns at the passers-by; yonder, a pen of cackling geese flapped distracted wings and extended yards of snowy neck with prodigious outcry; and now there was a stampede among the ever-increasing crowd, as a great cart-colt was led past floundering and kicking.

The Meatyards stared about them, and wondered and commented, and had almost forgotten Becky in their interest and excitement, when they suddenly came upon her, walking arm in arm with no other person than her rival Bithey.

'Why, bless me, Rebecca, so here ye be!' cried the farmer. 'And Bithey too. What! Han't ye been judged yet? An' who's the winner?'

'What does he say?' asked Tabitha plaintively of the other competitor, and the Meatyards noticed with surprise that her tone was meek, and indeed confiding.

'Master do want to know if we've a' been judged yet, my dear,' returned Becky soothingly. 'I reckon he'll be surprised when he do hear how we've a-been used.'

'Ees indeed,' sighed Bithey, and she wiped her eyes with a corner of her shawl.

'There, don't 'ee take on, my dear,' said Rebecca, patting her hand affectionately. 'The poor soul,' she explained, turning to the farmer and his wife, who were gazing at the pair open-mouthed, 'the poor soul do seem to be quite undone. I d'low 'twas a shame to go and disapp'int her so. 'Twill ha' gied her quite a turn—at her age an' all.'

'Tis no worse for me nor 'tis for you, my dear,' put in Bithey with a groan of sympathy. 'You had further to come nor me, an' you must be half shook to pieces a-ridin' in that old cart.'

'In the name o' fortin,' cried the exasperated Mr. Meatyard, 'which on you did get the prize? There you do go chatterin' an' jabberin' and neither of you will tell us which be the winner.'

'You'd never think ——' began Bithey.

'Tis the most unfairest thing you ever did hear on!' exclaimed Becky. 'There was the two of us—the woldest women for miles round, I'll go bail. I'm sure ye did only need to look at Bithey here to see it.'

'And I'm sure,' wailed Tabitha, 'the very sight o' your grey hair did ought to ha' shamed them, Becky.'

Here the impatient farmer made a sudden lunge at them, almost after the fashion of the curly-horned prize ram, and the two old women simultaneously announced in an agitated whimper:

'There, they didn't give the prize to neither of us!'

'Dear heart alive! you don't say so?' said Mrs. Meatyard, after a pause of blank amazement, while her husband uttered a shrill whistle. 'Didn't 'ee get no prize at all, then?'

'Wasn't 'ee so much as "'Ighly Commended," Beck?' cried her master, recovering from his stupor, and uttering a roar of laughter.

'No, sir,' returned Rebecca mournfully, 'I didn't get nothin' at all—nor Bithey neither. They never took a bit of notice after they'd axed how long we'd been in our present sitoations. They went and give the butter-dish to quite a young 'ooman. I don't think she can ha' been more nor fifty-five. 'Ees, sir, if ye'll believe me, a big strapping woman as stout as me and Bithey put together, and so firm on her legs as anything.'

'Whew!' whistled the farmer again, 'you don't say so! Well, I never did—there must ha' been some reason as you didn't know on.'

'Maybe she was blind,' suggested Mrs. Meatyard. 'That 'ud be a p'int in her favour.'

'No more blind nor yourself, ma'am,' returned Becky almost triumphantly. 'She'd a-been thirty year in the one place—that was all as I could hear as she could say for herself, and they went and give her the butter-dish wi'out no more talk than that. So, when I did see how upset poor Bithey was—an' she so troubled with the rheumatiz, poor wold body—I jist says to her, says I, "You take my arm, my dear," says I; "you jist come along of I." And she were glad enough to do it.'

'I d'low I was,' agreed her whilom rival. 'I reckon I thought it oncommon kind. "'Ees," says I, "Becky love," says I, "I take it oncommon kind o' you to help me same as you're a-doin' of, for ye bain't so young yourself," says I.'

Mr. Meatyard slapped his thigh and shouted with laughter.

'You've changed your note, I see—both on you,' he exclaimed as soon as he could speak. 'Well, and where are you bound for now?'

'Why, d'ye see, sir,' said Becky, 'her an' me is both tired o' this—we are—jist *about*! And so she says to me, says she, "Let's go over to one o' them little booths over there and set down for a bit, and rest us." Didn't ye, Bithey?'

'I did,' said Bithey, 'and I says, "Becky," says I, "'arter all this standin', and all this talkin', and all the dust and sawdust flyin' about, I'm awful dry," I says; "what would you say," says I, "to a bottle of Pop?"'

The farmer laughed again, but his wife strongly advised the old couple to have recourse to that restorative, and they therefore toddled away together to drown the memory of their differences and, if possible, of their disappointment in a sparkling and innocuous glass.

M. E. FRANCIS.

A Second Essay in Dreams.

AS an act, too long delayed, of common courtesy, I must begin this Second Essay in Dreams by grateful acknowledgment of the very many letters referring to the former essay that I have been quite unable to answer severally. In regard to the first half-dozen or so that came, I did my duty nobly, and acknowledged them appreciatively by return of post; but when they began crowding in to the number of four or five daily the strain became too great for my industry and courtesy. They went into their pigeon-hole without a response, and I must needs take the present opportunity of thanking collectively the great majority of those who were good enough to write to me, and beg them to believe that I had every wish to express my gratitude more quickly and more personally, but was unable to do so for lack of enough hands to write. Interest in the subject of the first essay seems to have been aroused more widely than I had ventured to hope—interest due, I fear, to the subject rather than its treatment; but, for all that, it may be that not every one read that first essay (I may mention, in case any may care to refer back to it, that it appeared in the January, 1900, number of *LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE*), and it may even be that not every one, having read it, remembers accurately the classes into which I there ventured tentatively to arrange dreams in the order of what I conceived to be their most frequent occurrence. I will therefore repeat these classes briefly, so that we may be able to start fairly with a mutual understanding between reader and writer. Let me say yet again, in order that the drift of the business may be perfectly clear, that the classes are arranged in the order of what appears their most frequent occurrence, the 'falling' dream seeming to me to be by far the most frequent, the 'flying' dream of second rank in the order of frequency of occurrence, and so forth. The category in the first essay was as follows:—

1. The falling dream; you are falling over a precipice or down the stairs.

2. The flying dream, the dream that you can fly.
3. The dream of more or less inadequate toilet, that you are not properly clothed.
4. The dream of not being able to get away from some beast or injurious person or thing that is pursuing you.
5. The dream of being drawn irresistibly to some dangerous place, such as a fire.
6. The dream that some darling wish has been gratified.
7. The dream of being about to go a journey and being unable to get your things into your trunks, &c.

The object that I had in view when I tentatively threw out this suggested category was to induce some who might have given the subject serious thought to come forward and tell us their view of the causes, physical or mental, that produced the different classes, for it is not to be easily believed that the same dreams would occur so often to the same people and to different people without a common cause producing them. Of course, when one starts a hare of this nature one does not know to what lengths or what kind of country it is likely to lead one, and out of the considerable bulk of correspondence that people have been good enough to send me on the subject many very interesting points are noted and issues and questions raised that do not directly throw light on the causes that produce the different dreams. The correspondence that I have received seems to me to contain matter of interest that may be conveniently grouped under several distinct heads. There are some suggestions directly responsive to my question of the causes of the dreams; some dreams that had escaped my own notice or that did not seem of sufficient frequency to be worthy of a class to themselves have been shown to deserve recognition in the form of a separate class; suggestive and interesting additions to the dreams within the classes that I drew up have been contributed, besides many comments on the subject as a whole that are full of interest although they do not advance one's general understanding of the way that the different, well-distinguished, dreams come about. The most interesting and perhaps the most mysterious of the additional classes that have been suggested to me is, I think, what we may call the 'dream within a dream' class. You dream that you are dreaming; you awake, still in your dream, out of your dream, and you go on with the other, and when really awake are conscious both of the outer and of the inner dream, so to speak. This is an experience that has never come to me personally; but it is mentioned by more

than one correspondent, and is therefore, perhaps, to be placed in a class by itself, having in all cases of its occurrence a common, though surely a very subtle and complex, cause. Perhaps to be mentioned in association with this dream within a dream question is the question of 'dual personality,' which a correspondent, for whose opinion I am bound to have more than ordinary respect, suggests, as an explanation of some of the phenomena of dreams. It is very well known that in the case of certain hypnotic subjects, studied at the Salpêtrière and elsewhere, a 'dual personality,' as it is called, has been developed. That is to say, for instance, that a young peasant girl of Brittany, typical of her class and perfectly ignorant of any classical language, will, in a certain stage of the hypnotic trance, imagine herself to be, let us say, a priest of the middle ages, and gabble monkish Latin. Of course it sounds utterly incredible; but the fact is abundantly testified, and I believe that cases have even been known in which, at a further stage of the hypnotic trance, a third personality has been developed wherein the patient acts, thinks, and speaks in a manner perfectly agreeing with this third metempsychosis, as one might almost call it, and perfectly distinct from the action, thought, or speech exhibited either in the natural state or in the earlier stage of the hypnotic trance. However that may be, it is on the dual personality, merely, that my correspondent, in whom I put much faith, takes his stand, suggesting it as an explanation, and the most probable explanation, of some dream phenomena. For example, the instruction of youth has occupied much of his time during the life here below. He has dreamed, according to a well-known tendency that we noticed in the first essay, of dreams to concern themselves with the stuff of waking thoughts, that he was lecturing to an assemblage of sufficiently thick-headed students, endeavouring with some measure of success to make them comprehend an involved argument or subtle point, when, suddenly, just as his eloquence and lucidity had gained their interested attention, the whole train of his thoughts and their own was confounded by a raucous voice shouting behind his back, 'The Prince, the Prince! Make way for the Prince!' The prince, as it turned out, was Ranjitsinji, prince of cricketers, and the scene instantly shifted, as it only does in dreams or Drury Lane, to Lord's Pavilion, and the prince himself appeared in the semblance of a fat old Indian nabob—anything but a sharp short-slip. Very well, then, argues my friend, this is only to be explained on the supposition of a joint authorship, a dual personality, of whom

the one, the good and intellectual Dr. Jekyll, is conducting his dream lecture in orderly fashion until it is suddenly spoiled by the intrusion of the Philistine and raucous-voiced Mr. Hyde with his cricket.

Again, the same dreamer quotes me a dream pointing, in his opinion, to a like conclusion. He is a sufficient French scholar to read French fluently, occasionally, when in the country, finding his vocabulary, or at least his idiom, a little lacking for want of practice. In his dream he finds himself, thus moderately equipped with French, conversing with a Parisian speaking the language with the delicacy and swiftness of finished perfection. Now and again the Englishman has to ask the Frenchman to repeat more slowly. Now, how is it possible, my friend in effect asks me, that I could put into the mouth of my Parisian that perfect and beautiful French and at the same time could find it now and again beyond me to understand it? Surely this, again, must be a case of the dual personality, myself being myself with the 'French of Stratford-atte-Bowe,' my dream-man with his perfect Parisian my second, my dual, self.

I do not agree with my friend in this, for all my respect for his opinion. I could not respect him so much if I could not venture frankly to disagree with him. In the first place, I suspect this fluent Parisian, with his perfect idiom and fluency, altogether. You see, the only evidence that we have of the idiom and the fluency is the effect they produced on the mind of my dreaming friend. That he should imagine a man speaking beautiful French to him is easy enough to comprehend; that he should accordingly have difficulty in understanding his quick speech, and should ask for a repetition, is only in accord with what would be his natural conception of a conversation in which he and a born Parisian took part. There is nothing difficult to imagine in this; but, on the other hand, what is difficult is to imagine that he was a better French scholar asleep than awake, or that the dual personality is the correct explanation. Far easier to credit, according to my thinking, that he imagined the Frenchman's diction more perfect than he could have made it.

And this very consideration brings us into touch with a remarkable fact of dreams that has been noticed long ago—the extremely moderate calibre of dream wit, dream intellect, dream humour, and the mental operations of dreams altogether. It has often been observed that in dreams we seem to have hit now and again on a wonderfully illuminating thought, a remarkably neat

epigram, or a solution of a problem that has baffled everybody—perpetual motion has probably been solved again and again by dreamers; but whenever one has awakened with any exact remembrance of those achievements, they have proved to waking criticism the merest drivel and only vaguely coherent. This, at least, is my personal experience of the intellectual efforts of dreams, and I believe it to be confirmed by general consensus. On the other side it is only fair that I should note a passage in one of the letters that a correspondent was good enough to write me about the first essay. 'Feats of considerable intellectual energy,' he writes, 'have also been satisfactorily accomplished in dreams—*e.g.* a friend of the writer once composed a parody on Scott's 'Lay of the Last Minstrel,' and remembered it quite well in the morning. School-boys and school-girls, too, have worked out problems in their dreams which have defeated their best efforts in consciousness, and they remembered the working and solutions with satisfactory results the next day.'

On this point it is to be said that the fact of composing a parody on the 'Lay of the Last Minstrel' does not of necessity amount to a great intellectual performance. It is only the quality of the performance that should be the measure of its greatness, and of that the writer gives us no assurance. To remember the parody in the morning was indeed a feat, but it was a feat of the waking, rather than the dreaming, intellect. In regard to the solution of problems by boys and girls during sleep, I can only say that I have heard no instances in support of it, although it is very true, and the fact was noticed in the previous essay, that a piece of repetition conned over at night and very imperfectly known then, is sometimes remembered quite pat for early school the next morning. There is a strong inference that it must have occupied the mind during sleep; but that does not bring it within the sphere of dreaming as defined by an operation of the mind during sleep of which one is conscious on awaking. It is one of the most curious points in this connection that we seem to have learned the repetition without any consciousness that it has occupied the thoughts during sleep. Common fairness demanded that I should put on record this statement of my correspondent, although it does not agree with my own experience, nor with the experience that I believe to be general. There is the old tale of Coleridge, it is true, and his 'Kubla Khan;' but in the first place it is to be noted that this poem, if composed in sleep at all, was composed in

the unnatural sleep of opium ; and it is permitted to suspect that, while the scenes described were doubtless dreamed, the language in which they were put on paper occurred to the poet's mind as he wrote. If by feats of 'considerable intellectual energy' my correspondent referred only to the range of thought, it would accord with the common experience of all dreamers ; but referring it to the power and quality of the thought, as it is referred in the case of solution of hard problems, it is almost certainly at variance with what we commonly find to be the facts. Lawyers are said to have written in their dreams lucid opinions of cases submitted to them. This, if true, and the evidence is strong, is very wonderful ; but to accept it as true does not prevent our recording it as very exceptional, nor the fact that most of the intellectual feats that strike us as so brilliant in dreams appear folly to our waking criticism. It is probably this very lack and abeyance of the logical and rational faculty that permits to the dreaming thoughts their immense, their unrestricted, range, a range untrammelled by the hard and fast laws of fact and possibility, with the result that the dreams of some who are most prosaic thinkers in the waking state are marked by the most extensive flights of the imagination. A striking instance, worth recording for the singularity of the dream itself, as well as its illustrative bearing on this general quality of dreams, occurred within the writer's knowledge. A friend of his, of most calm and philosophical cast of mind, dreamed that he saw his face in a mirror. He was surprised to find it covered with grime. On nearer inspection he was yet more startled (with the mild sub-normal surprise of the dream state) to see that each grime mark had the shape of a tiny hand-print, the thumb-mark in each print being a little defective. There was a basin handy, in which he washed his face, and the water forthwith became bemuddied by the grime which gradually settled to the bottom of the basin, and as it settled formed itself into the shape of many little hands perfectly formed, save that each hand was a little defective by reason of a deformed and stunted thumb. My friend could think of no occasion of this dream that shows imaginative power so strangely vivid. It is hard to tell the extent to which novelists have drawn from their dream imagination, but probably their debt is considerable. Avowedly Turgenieff and Stevenson did so, and James Payn saw in a dream the main incident in the losing of the *Lost Sir Mas-singberd*. Probably many another, likely enough without being

aware to what extent, has drawn from the same source; and, of course, Alice, both in 'Wonderland' and the 'Looking-glass,' moves through pure and simple Dreamland. But that is a different matter from saying that the incidents were actually dreamed.

In investigating the stuff of our dreams, one of the difficulties is that it is so hard to remember that we must judge them and account for them by other standards than we apply to our consideration of the working of our waking intellect. It is this difficulty, I fancy, that led my friend to infer that there was within him a dual personality, only in evidence when he slept, capable of talking pure Parisian. It is so impossible to say how we know, or think we know, our dream creations to be what they are. For instance, to quote another correspondent, whose opinion deserves every consideration, we find ourselves in Harley Street; it is full of shops, yet we know that it *is* Harley Street; or in another well-known street, and we know it to be *that* street, and yet, instead of houses, there are the trunks of beech trees on either hand. In the logic-monger's language we have got the 'denotation,' but the 'connotation' is all adrift. We may suspect that my friend's purest Parisian was like the shops of Harley Street, which, when awake, has never a shop in its long dull length. This friend is one of the many who have known the dream within a dream, to me unknown. That dream is worth transcribing, for the sake of the explanation that he suggests for it. 'I was chatting,' is his account of the dream, 'with a school friend; the scene a familiar walk by a river. We were smoking, and I relating something that had come into my life since I had seen him. Suddenly, feeling unaccountably drowsy, I said, "Fred, old boy, the sun is unbearably hot, let's have a nap. I'll get under this bush." The scene had changed, as it does in dreams. The bush was a whin, the river became bunkers and links, Fred turned into his brother George. This transformation did not affect me, and I laid myself under the whin and was asleep at once. In that sleep I had an inner dream, and, though foggy and ill-defined, I was able, at the breakfast table, to give some outline of it to those around.' The explanation that my friend suggests is as follows: 'That, by some movement of an arm or body while in the original or normal dream, I had drawn the sheet over my head, and become hot and half suffocated; but, being gradual, the sensation did not waken me. The second dream must have been almost instantaneous, for I could not long have suffered the semi-asphyxiation, and when it could no longer be endured, by a motion of the arm I may have

unveiled, as I had covered, my breathing apparatus, and burst into oxygen instead of carbonic acid gas.'

The explanation, whether or no it be accepted, is ingenious. Mr. Andrew Lang, at the 'Sign of the Ship,' rebukes me, in his humorous and gently chiding way, for not knowing what Mr. Tylor says of savages' dreams in primitive culture, what Mr. Im Thurn, of the dreams of Indians of British Guiana, what the people say who profess to fly, not dreaming, but when awake, naming it levitation, for euphony, and what conclusions the experiments of Maury and Du Prel have led to. Now Maury I did know of, Mr. Tylor I ought to have known of, but had forgotten, and of Mr. Im Thurn (such is fame, or such is ignorance) I had never heard. But in the course of the first essay it did not occur to me that the dreams of savages came within the view I was suggesting of the subject—nor does Maury attack the subject from that view-point; and as for the people who say they fly, to the 'plain man' what they seem to do is expressed phonetically by 'fly' with the initial letter taken off. From one's knowledge of men it seems an hypothesis much more acceptable than the one that they advance. Maury experimented by giving a sleeper pin-pricks to make him dream of spear-thrusts—that is the type of his experiments—and sometimes the sleeper dreamed of spear-thrusts 'quite good,' but sometimes of something quite different, and sometimes of nothing at all—that is, he could remember nothing when he awoke. So what Maury proved amounts to something like this negative conclusion, that the same *sensational* cause will not always produce the same dream effect. And let it be said here, at once, for fear of misunderstanding through inattention, that this is not the same as proving that the same dream is not always produced by the same cause. It does not directly touch that question.

Mr. Lang is inclined to demur to the definition of dream as a mental operation in sleep that is remembered on awaking, on the ground that mental operations of one person while asleep are often made obvious, by speech or action, to another, though the sleeper will perhaps have no knowledge of them when awake. Whether this is to be called a dream depends—on what? On the meaning we ascribe to the word. Now, if we take the view that mental operations go on all the while we sleep, but that in so-called dreamless sleep we forget them, then it is evident that we must limit 'dream' to the mental operations we remember. Otherwise it becomes a name of one constant aspect of sleep, which is not what we want. But if we take the view that these

mental operations go on intermittently, then 'dream' may have a meaning distinct from 'sleep,' as indicating the moments in which those operations do go on. Whether they go on all the while, or intermittently, there seems to be a division of opinion among the clever people, that is to say, the people who write books about it (which, no doubt, is synonymous). Opinions appear so equally divided that they seem to cancel each other fairly—it is not the first time that the opinions of the learned have been so divided, nor the first time that it has been noticed; Dean Swift noticed it)—so that we are left with a sheet tolerably blank to put our little opinions on—a very happy condition.

There is no doubt that we can discriminate broadly between two kinds of causes of dreams—external and internal. External are such as affect our senses, even in sleep—noises, heat, and cold. Internal are of two kinds, sensational, as indigestion, and cramped position of limbs, or mental. When we go to sleep the heart beats more slowly, the supply of blood to the vessels of the brain is diminished, and the effect (without going into disquisitions about the different functions of different parts of the brain) is that the higher mental powers of reason and volition are in almost complete abeyance. It is a fact very well known that when the higher processes, which really exercise a considerable control over the lower in sane waking life, are in abeyance, the lower mental processes become much more active, the imagination ranges without a check, following each suggestion of associated idea, or of sense, without any reference to the laws of reasonable probability or possibility. That is why we get the little hand-prints with the defective thumbmarks, the Kubla Khan's gardens, and the rest of the works of imagination. Evidently, with the limits that reason sets on the waking imagination removed, it is impossible to forecast the direction or the length which the train of ideas suggested by association in dreams may take, even if one can perceive the first stimulus that set it working; but it certainly does seem as if there must be some common stimulus of each of the more common and easily defined classes of dreams, and as if the common stimulus ought not to be so subtle as to elude us.

It would run this essay to quite an impossible length if I were to attempt to give an account of anything like all the interesting dreams and dream facts that correspondents have been kind enough to send me; but I must mention one, because it is illustrative of a curious fact that is well known indeed, but very interesting both in its bearing on the dream state in particular,

and on general psychological phenomena. Some small article had been lost, I forget now what, let us say a key, belonging to one of two sisters who were travelling together. It could nowhere be found. But one night one of the sisters dreamed that she saw the key in the pocket of her travelling bag. She told this dream, on waking, to the other. 'And have you looked in the pocket?' the sister asked. 'No, I have not,' said she, 'for the very good reason that there is no pocket in my travelling bag.' 'Well,' said the other, 'there is a pocket in mine. I will just have a look there on the chance,' and there the key was found. The inference is that the dreamer had seen (with the eye of sense, though not with the eye of observation) the key put into the pocket. Even when the key was so found she had no recollection of seeing it placed there, but the brain had unconsciously recorded the sensation; in course of sleep it had stumbled on that record, and by good luck the sleeper on awaking chanced to remember the mental operation that had taken place during sleep. It is a singular and almost alarming reflection that our brains are stored with countless such records of which we know nothing, nor ever shall know, unless the association of ideas or some peculiar mental state bring them to our notice. In regard to all this side of the subject Miss Cobbe writes very interestingly and suggestively in the essays on Unconscious Cerebration and on Dreams respectively, that are included in her volume named *Darwinism in Morals*. The dream state with its apparently ready obedience to each suggestion arising from association of ideas would seem to be very analogous to the state of hypnotic trance. In both there is the same lowering of the heart's action and diminished blood supply to the brain, and on the mental side the same suspension of the powers of reason with an increase, that is, very probably, a consequence, of some of those mental faculties that we are bound to deem lower. It is also worth noting that the mental operations of the sane dreamer have a close resemblance to the operations of the waking mind of a person suffering from that kind of dementia that comes from an insufficient supply of blood to the brain.

And now, to take up the argument more directly in connection with the point of view which suggested these very superficial and tentative essays, I would say that there seem to me to be only two classes that can usefully be added, out of the mass of correspondence that I have received, to those set down at first, the dream of strange and beautiful scenery, and the dream of hearing

distinctly a voice in the room. The dream within a dream would seem to be of sufficiently frequent occurrence to make it worthy a class to itself, but probably produced by causes that are too complex to give the most remote hope of discovering its common stimulus in different cases. But the dream that one is in very beautiful scenery, never before seen, or not remembered, although it has never occurred to me, is evidently very general, nor would one conceive it impossible that it may have a cause common to most cases of its occurrence which we might discover; and the same may be said of hearing, with great distinctness, a voice, generally, I think, of some one familiar to the dreamer, who awakes immediately and cannot, for a few moments, escape from the impression that the owner of the voice is actually in the room. This dream has often occurred to me, though I had not realised that it was so common. It is never a long oration that one hears—only a distinct and loudly uttered sentence. Then one awakes, and that is the end. There are stories, I know, witnessed too strongly for one to disregard them, of such voices being the utterance of a person dying at a distance at the moment the sleeper hears them; but they open up a wide and tremendous question far removed from the humble scope of these essays and beside their purpose. The vast majority of such dream voices seem to be without any such significance, and purely the creation of the sleeper's fancy.

A notable feature of this dream is that the voice seems to be heard suddenly—there is no previous apparition of the person to whom it belongs; our recollection, when we awake, is restricted to hearing, very distinctly, the sentence uttered. Miss Cobbe has been kind enough to draw my attention to the fact that the case is exactly the same in the falling dream. There is no dream consciousness previous to the fall. We do not walk up to the precipice and then fall over, but are conscious of the actual fact of falling, and of that only. I will make bold to hazard the conjecture that in both of these cases it is the exceeding vividness of the dream consciousness immediately preceding the awaking that prevents our recollection of any mental operations that may have occurred in our previous sleep.

And now that we have been brought back again to the beginning of the series of dreams, according to the category, and the ground has been cleared of some few of the more striking of my correspondents' remarks on the general subject, I will take the

classes in their order, and talk about them briefly in the new lights that have been thrown across them.

By way of explanation of the falling dream I find that the common account given of it is that it is caused by a form of indigestion that causes pressure on the heart, and consequent sending of blood to the brain with a jerk. But why this should make us imagine we are falling is still left unexplained, and I fail to see that this 'explanation' puts us farther on our road. It is to be observed that when we say that we 'imagine we are falling' we give a true account of the dream; but when we say we 'feel as if we are falling,' we give, in all probability, an untrue account. For we do not know, the great majority of us, what the sensation is of falling from a great height. What happens to us in the falling dream is therefore something that gives us the impression that we *imagine* we should experience in falling from a height. That is all we can say. One of my correspondents does indeed suggest that the dream is a survival from the time when we lived in trees, and a chief anxiety of our lives was the fear of falling out of them in sleep. But I am not aware that monkeys often fall from trees in their sleep; and, even so, we ceased being monkeys some time ago. If we analyse our impression of falling from a height, we shall find, I think, that a chief factor in it is the moving upward, past our eyes, of stationary objects—as the side of the precipice, &c. If any quaint trick were to be played by our circulation, or any other influence, on our optic nerves during sleep, so as to give us this impression of things moving upwards past us, we should have at once, as it seems to me, material for the construction of the falling dream. Also it would account for the singular fact that so few (though there are exceptions) of the dreamers of the falling dream ever come to the bottom, for we may suppose that most of us are awakened by the vividness of the impression of the stationary objects going upward past our eyes. Of course, I only hazard this as the merest unconfirmed conjecture, which only claims the merit of being, in my humble opinion, a better explanation than I have yet heard or seen offered.

It is also an explanation that, with a slight difference, perhaps might account for the flying dream. Any influence on the optic nerve that might make us appear to see objects moving horizontally below us might conceivably give us the impression that we were moving horizontally above them; and I should very much like to hear whether either or both these dreams come within the category of the dreams known to blind persons, for if either class of these

so common dreams were constantly excluded from their category the inference would be strong that the dreams were connected with the optic nerves. I believe it to be a tolerably ascertained fact, as it is in accordance with *a priori* probability, that blind persons never imagine themselves in their dreams to be seeing. Their dreams are confined to impressions of the senses that they possess in waking life. Incidentally I may say that among all my correspondents, to most of whom the flying dream is familiar, one only (and it is the only instance I have ever heard of) flies at any considerable height. All the rest of the world skim, with a floating motion, just over the pedestrians' heads. The prone position of the body during sleep is an explanation that is suggested for the flying dream, but one that scarcely strikes me as being very satisfactory.

In regard to the dream of inadequate clothing, I regret to say that two of my correspondents admit appearing in their dreams in a condition of utter nudity, yet with no properly corresponding sense of shame, and a sense of shame there is, yet in no degree adequate to the offence; and while on this point I may say that, whereas two correspondents aver that their moral sense is active in the dream state, so that they feel acute remorse for their evil acts, in the very great majority of instances it seems to be in utter abeyance, so that the mildest mannered and most tender conscientious commit atrocious crimes without a regretful afterthought. By way of explanation of this dream of inadequate clothing, it is suggested that it is produced by the fact that our nightdresses are as a rule of a light material, perhaps giving the impression that we are lightly clad; but the blankets are comfortably thick, and if we are to accept this hypothesis, we ought to find, when we awake from this dream, that we have thrown off most of the bedclothes, which I do not think is the case; and, again, we ought to dream this particular dream more often in warm weather, when one's bedclothing is light, than in winter, when it is heavy. But this, again, does not seem to agree with the evidence. Neither do the changes in the temperature, or indeed any external sensational causes, seem to give adequate explanation of any of the well-defined classes of dreams, although it is possible to induce a sleeper to answer you by addressing him a question that seems suited to the course of his unconscious mental operations as you infer it from his more or less coherent talking. But, broadly, it may be said, I think, that there is no ascertainable common external cause for any of the dreams in

these classes. The dream of inadequate clothing I would suggest to be an idea inspired by some inconvenience that has actually occurred, as of a person coming into a room unexpectedly while you were dressing, he perhaps mistaking it for his own room. The conceivable cases of the kind are infinite.

The dream of the gratification of a darling wish permits a very similar explanation, and perhaps presents less difficulty than any other class in the category. And the dream of unsuccessful packing, that might perhaps be better termed the dream of exaggerated trivial inconveniences (clergymen dream that they lose their place in church for an hour together, and so on) arise, probably enough, from a remembrance of similar inconveniences actually occurring which the unrestricted dream imagination magnifies according to its manner.

The dream that a beast or bogey pursues you, and that you suffer from a paralysis preventing your escape, as well as the dream that you are drawn irresistibly to a burning fiery furnace or other undesirable place, may arise from a recollection of childish terrors, aided, as has been suggested to me, by the comparative inability to move one's limbs in sleep. My correspondent, who ascribes the falling dream to an inheritance from our anthropoid days, has no trouble in explaining the bogey dream in a like fashion. From my own experience I am satisfied that the bogey dream is nearly, if not quite, always caused by physical discomfort, whether arising from the operations of digestion or the position of the body; but I cannot find that any particular form of the bogey dream follows any particular form of the physical discomfort.

And so, enough. Charming dreams have been communicated to me—a child's dream that the ticket collector came to the door of the railway carriage with the face of a monster; a dream, reminiscent of the myth of Er, where the dreamer died and was put, with a number of others, to look for his soul (the souls were like blown-up bladders lying in a heap) in a big barn; a dream of being in heaven, from which the dreamer was glad to awake, because it gave her 'a feeling of constraint,' and so on, to impossible lengths. I have been rebuked for saying it was unusual to dream of ghosts, because we often dream of people who are dead; but as a rule (though not always) they appear to us as they were in life, and it is only when we awake that we remember, with a bitter pang, that they are dead.

By no effort of will, I think, are we able to suggest dreams to

ourselves. One correspondent tells me that if he wishes to avoid dreaming of any particular subject he concentrates his last waking thoughts on it, in the assurance that it will then not recur in his dreams; but reason and volition are not always, though they are generally, fast asleep, for many of us are conscious of willing effectively the continuance of a pleasant dream, although we cannot suggest it to ourselves effectively in the first instance. Moreover, when we come to mature years it happens now and then that we have a recurrence of the boggy dream or nightmare that so vexed our childhood, and therein it occurs not very unfrequently that we recognise the torment to be a dream affair, and force ourselves to awake from it, knowing, although we know it to be a dream (a very singular feature of the business), that it will continue to torment us if we let it run its course. This, if nothing else, would suffice to show that reason and volition are not always in complete abeyance during sleep, and, further, the fact that this dream terror or nightmare is so much more common with children than adults, is probably due in great measure to the fact that their less developed powers of reason and will are more easily and completely overcome in sleep. To a rather similar cause we may perhaps attribute the dreams of terror that attend the sleep of those whose powers of mind and will have been weakened by illness, by excessive drinking, or, generally, by any abnormal and prolonged strain on the nerves.

H. G. HUTCHINSON.

In the Name of a Woman.

BY ARTHUR W. MARCHMONT,

AUTHOR OF 'BY RIGHT OF SWORD,' 'A DASH FOR A THRONE,' &c.

CHAPTER XX.

A WARNING.

THE Princess looked magnificent in the fire of anger which succeeded her alarm as she turned to the old Kolfort for an explanation.

'I presume you will scarcely order your soldiers to shoot me,' she said, facing him grandly, her eyes flashing.

I slipped my sword back into its scabbard, and the General made a peremptory sign to the Captain to withdraw his men.

We waited in silence while the order was given, and the men filed out, followed by the Captain.

'Remain in the ante-room,' said the General.

'You mistake me greatly, General Kolfort, if you think your soldiers will be needed for work like this,' cried the Princess. 'Pray what is the explanation of what I saw when I arrived?'

I thought I could best give that, and said:

'General Kolfort had arrested me, and when I refused to give up my sword had ordered these men of his to shoot me.'

'Is this possible?' she cried, her indignation flaming in her face. 'And yet of course it is. I have heard within the last few minutes of what was done last night and of this visit of yours, Count Benderoff, and I hurried here, fearing mischief. Thank Heaven, I arrived in time; but I did not dream such an infamous act would ever be attempted.'

'"Infamous" is a strong word, Princess,' said Kolfort sternly.

'I use it because I can find no stronger,' was the quick, spirited

retort. 'By what right, and in whose name, do you contemplate such an outrage?'

'The General declared that I was a renegade officer plotting against the reigning Prince, and that I therefore deserved imprisonment in the fortress of Tirnova. The General himself being, of course, so zealous a loyalist, the thought that any one should so conspire was naturally repugnant to him.'

I threw as much irony into my tone as I could, and ended with an intentionally aggravating and somewhat insolent sneer. I wished to put as ugly a complexion as possible on his conduct.

'The matter is one which you and I had better discuss in private, Princess,' said the old man, who was now fast recovering his habitual self-restraint.

'Why in private?'

'Because I prefer it, Princess.'

'I see no reason. The Count is fully aware of all our matters, is one of my most trusted advisers and friends, and his welfare and safety touch me very closely. The matter can be settled here and now.'

'You are presuming much——'

'I do not understand the word "presumption" in such a case, and from you, General Kolfort,' cried Christina, proudly, 'and I will not hear it.'

'If your Highness has no further need of my services, nor of the influence of my Government in your affairs, you have but to say so,' he said in a tone of calculated menace. But he didn't frighten my brave and staunch Princess, and she answered him in a tone of queenly dignity.

'If your services can go no higher than the cold-blooded murder of my friends and adherents, I shall be glad for your Government to release you from a position that you fill in a manner so unworthy of Russia and so bitterly hateful to myself.'

He had drawn a blank in the attempt to intimidate her, and was quick to see and wily enough to abandon it.

'Yet I have not been unmindful hitherto of your interests,' he answered.

'Hitherto they do not appear to have clashed with your own plans and private animosities,' she flashed, with a sting that festered at once.

'This is rather a matter of your private feelings than mine,' he said, with a significant glance in my direction.

'I will not affect to misunderstand you,' she answered readily,

with mounting colour. 'Our interview yesterday makes that unnecessary. That, as I read it, is the real reason at the bottom of this last act of yours. I gave my word then to marry the Duke Sergius, and I would have kept it at all hazards. But I did not mean, and will not suffer, that my marriage with the Duke should be the death-sentence upon Count Benderoff.'

'You "would have kept" your word. Do you mean——?' He paused; and how I hung upon her reply may be imagined.

'I mean that, as the Duke has involved himself in a quarrel, and been seriously wounded for his pains, I cannot well become his wife the day after to-morrow.'

'There must be no delay,' he retorted quickly.

'Delay!' she cried, her eyes flashing again brilliantly. 'Do you think if you had murdered my friend here, or if you dared to thrust him into a prison, that I would ever make a marriage that at the best must be hateful to me?'

'This friendship of yours threatens to be exceedingly inconvenient; and if you mean to allow it to interfere with urgent matters of State, we may as well abandon all our plans, or look for some other means of carrying them out.'

'If a policy of murder is your only alternative, I agree with you,' she exclaimed, taking up his challenge instantly. 'I will not have the steps of my throne running with blood shed by Russia.'

He bit his lip in chagrin and manifest embarrassment.

He might well be embarrassed. He had fired his two big guns—a threat first to withdraw from her cause and then to throw her over—and had found them both burst at the breech. A long pause followed, in which I watched his face closely. He appeared to come suddenly to a fresh decision, and changed his manner accordingly.

'Well, I am sorry to have distressed you, Princess. What is it you wish?'

'I will not have Count Benderoff, or any of my friends, subjected to interference at the hands of your agents. Their personal freedom and safety are my special charge.'

'The Count is at liberty to leave,' he replied on the instant, in his more customary curt, decisive tone. 'And I trust his future actions will not bring him again in conflict with me. He may take this as a warning.'

'I have done nothing in this case, and need no warning,' I

said warmly. 'If you allege anything against me, I am prepared to take the consequences, and demand to stand my trial.'

'This is no occasion that calls for mock heroics,' he sneered. 'In my opinion you should be in Tirnova; but the Princess has thought well to interfere in your behalf, and I bow to her wishes—for the present. That is all.'

'For the second time I owe my safety, and probably my life, to you, Princess,' I said, advancing to her. 'I have no words to thank you.'

'If you wish to show your thanks you had better stop that despatch you told me of,' interposed the General, not without a note of concern in his voice.

'There is no need for it if I am to remain at liberty,' I answered, half disposed to smile.

'I am ashamed there should have been this need for my interference, Count,' said the Princess, looking at me and smiling.

'I trust that there may come a chance for me to prove my gratitude,' I replied, scarce daring to meet her eyes; and with that I withdrew.

As I passed through the ante-chamber I was stopped by the Captain, whose men remained there on guard.

'I hope I am to let you pass, Count,' he said most courteously.

'General Kolfort has this moment said I am at liberty to go.'

'You know how strict our discipline is. Will you wait while, as a matter of form, I obtain his confirmation?'

'Most willingly,' I asserted. He went to the General's room, and in a moment returned smiling and holding out his hand.

'I am delighted. I know of you, of course, and, believe me, I have never passed through a more embarrassing minute in my life than that in his room.' His manner was so unaffectedly frank and friendly that I shook his hand cordially, and he came with me down the stairs and out into the street.

'I heard an account of last night's proceedings from one who was at Metzler's house, Count; I hope you do not judge us all by such an instance. I have just heard also what occurred this morning;' and in his tone and manner he contrived to convey a genuine compliment to my skill. 'The Duke is well punished.'

'I shall be glad to hear how he progresses,' I said, as my man brought my horse up.

'I hear that you have an excellent shooting gallery at your house, and that you are a remarkable shot.'

'Will you care to come and see it?'

‘Immensely, and perhaps to try the foils with you;’ and his face lighted as though I were granting him a great favour when I asked him to dine with me. I rode off, thankful indeed that I was still free, speculating whether I could in some way attach this Russian to me; and, what was still more important, wondering what lay behind the sudden change in old Kolfort’s manner, and whether he was concocting some further subtle plan against me.

Before I reached my house I had resolved on an important step, as the result of these later developments. After I had sent to Zoiloff to let him know what had happened, I wrote a fresh despatch to send to London, embodying much of what I had before written, and giving a brief description of my treatment at the General’s hands. I urged at greater length and with more insistence the desirability of steps being taken immediately on the lines I had suggested, declaring that there was necessity for immediate action; that I believed a complete change of front was contemplated by General Kolfort; that the Foreign Office must be prepared instantly with a successor to the reigning Prince—otherwise a *coup d’état* would be carried out, which I was convinced would result in Russia being left the complete master of the position; and that the one key to the situation would be found in timing the Prince’s abdication with the finding of a successor who would not be Russia’s tool. And I declared strongly in favour of the Princess Christina.

As soon as I had finished it I sent for my servant Markov, who had been away with me the previous night, and explained to him that he was to carry it to Nish, and place it in the hands of the British Consul there, and at the same time deliver a letter, which I wrote to Lieutenant Spernow. This note was to tell him to destroy the first despatch.

‘When you leave Nish,’ I added, explaining the next step, ‘you will return to the frontier by train, and from there to Sofia you must organise relays of horses at distances of from ten to twelve miles, avoiding the main road where possible, so that at any moment I can make sure of a quick, clear journey from here to the frontier. Spare no money in the effort to do the work well and quickly. You must have it complete in four days at the outside, three if possible. Choose your agents with great care, and give no hint for whom the work is being done. If questions are pressed, you can say it is in connection with a wager between Russian officers. I trust you implicitly, Markov,’ I concluded.

'And if you serve me well I will give you such a reward as will make you independent for life.'

He assured me earnestly of his attachment to me, and said that, as he came from that part of the country, he knew just the people who would do what was needed. Then he added a characteristically Bulgarian touch: 'They know me well in those parts, Count, and they hope that some day I shall settle among them. I am looking forward to being able to buy a small farm that I know of there, and marry.' I took the hint.

'Do this for me well, and I will buy the farm for you.'

'My lord is generosity itself!' cried the fellow, his face radiant with glee, and I knew I could depend upon a man of his kind when his personal feelings and self-interest were running in double harness.

My object was, of course, to prepare the means of flight should that become at any moment imperative; and such a contingency grew more probable the more closely I reflected upon what had passed at my interview with the General. And I explained my views to Zoiloff, who came hurrying to me on the receipt of my letter, and told him what I had done.

The Russian officer, Captain Wolasky, dined with me, and we spent an hour together in the shooting gallery. I did my utmost to create a favourable impression upon him, and appeared to be very successful; for he expressed a warm wish that we might see more of one another, and we parted on particularly friendly terms. I was careful, of course, to avoid any reference to political matters; but he himself let fall enough to show me that his work in Sofia was exceedingly distasteful, and that he had little sympathy with Kolfort's policy, and none at all with his methods.

'Russia must, of course, dominate the Balkans; that is the law of Nature,' he said once; 'but I detest a roundabout way of going to a mark when a straight road could be cut with ease. That's old Kolfort's way, however. He's just like a man grubbing in a cellar for coals, and will insist on having every little bit of rubbish through his fingers and storing and binning it for future use, as if he expected the day to come when rubbish would be worth more than coal, whereas one vigorous use of the shovel would give him all the coal he wants at once.'

I was far from displeased to find him out of conceit with the General, but said nothing.

'What could have been more abominable and disgusting than

his treatment of you to-day?' he exclaimed, when my wine had begun to heat him. 'It's that sort of barbarism that brings us Russians into such ill-repute. I know what would have happened. He would have given that order to shoot you without turning a hair, and then would have drawn up some bogus report or other about you having made a desperate attack upon his life, and have called upon me to witness it. I suppose he hates you for some reason, and that's at the bottom of it. There are plenty of black pages in his past, I can tell you.'

'You had better not,' I answered, smiling. I did not wish him to have the after-reflection that he had been talking too freely. If he were inclined to give me his confidence he should not lack opportunities; and I pressed him warmly, therefore, to come and see me frequently.

He came the next day when Zoiloff was with me, and again on the following day, when Spernow had returned, and we encouraged his intimacy in every possible way. Zoiloff, in the meantime, had made guarded inquiries about him, having at first been disposed to distrust him as a possible spy acting in General Kolfort's interest. He had found out that he was as genuine as he seemed—a man with no family influence to push his interests, of no means of his own, and constantly standing in his own light because of his scruples, and a blunt, rugged way of expressing them.

'A man not to be bought, but to be won,' declared Zoiloff. 'And, once won, to be trusted. He may be valuable to us;' and so indeed the event proved.

On the occasion of his fourth visit I noticed that he was reserved and seemed preoccupied, and while we were all going through our practice in the gallery he joined in it with small zest. We three were even more jubilant than usual. We had been pushing forward our preparations with the greatest energy and activity, and Zoiloff had declared to me his belief that in another ten days or a fortnight we might venture to make the *coup* towards which all our efforts were bent. Men had been sounded in all directions, and fresh adherents had come in in large numbers, and with great enthusiasm.

I myself had not seen the Princess since the memorable interview at the General's house; but she knew of all that we were doing. The marriage had been rendered impossible for the moment because the Duke's wound had taken a turn for the worse, and he lay battling almost for life. We had had no hint

that our suspicions of a change of front on Kolfort's part had any foundation; and our hopes ran high therefore that, after all, we should yet carry things through with a dash.

When our fencing was over, I observed that Captain Wolasky hung about as if waiting for Zoiloff and Spernow to go; and I dropped them a hint quietly that they had better do so.

As soon as we were alone, the Captain said:

'I am afraid this may be my last visit, Count.'

'Oh no, I hope not. Why?'

'You will not betray my confidence, I am sure. I have received a hint that my coming here is not acceptable to those in authority—to old Kolfort that means, of course.'

'Believe me, I am genuinely sorry. It cuts short what I hoped would be a pleasant friendship.' I spoke in all sincerity, for I liked him. 'But I can understand your position.'

'That is not all,' he added, and then hesitated and paused. I waited anxiously. 'Of course I ought not to say anything to you, but you have been so exceedingly friendly. You may have heard that strange developments are on foot?'

'No, I have heard nothing.' I began to take alarm.

'I am, of course, precluded from telling you their nature; but I should ill return your hospitality if I were not to give you a word of warning. You may prepare yourself for a startling change, likely to involve very serious consequences to you personally—if you remain in Sofia;' and his look said more than his words.

'You mean, I am in some danger?'

'Very grave danger, Count, and not you only.'

'I may not ask you whom you mean?'

'No, I am afraid not. But there is one person in whom report says you take a deep interest. I beg your pardon for even referring to such a matter. But the danger is very grave and—well, the frontier is very near, and not yet closed. I can say no more, and, indeed, I am sure I need not.'

'You have acted the part of a true friend, Captain. How long will the frontier be open? May I ask that?'

'Yes, I am expecting orders at any moment to guard a certain line of it, and the cordon will be very securely drawn.'

This was news indeed, and for long after he had left me I sat brooding over it deep in thought. I was right after all, it seemed; and the cunning old Russian spider had woven a fresh web.

CHAPTER XXI.

FIGHT OR FLIGHT?

WITH the following day came startling confirmation of Captain Wolasky's warning. While I was with the regiment a letter was brought to me from the Prince requesting me to wait upon him.

I found him labouring under considerable excitement, pacing the floor restlessly and awaiting me impatiently.

'I thought you were never coming, Count,' he said irritably. 'There seems to be no one now on whom I can rely.'

'I came the instant I received your command, your Highness.'

'Then there must have been some strange delay in giving my message. I cannot understand it.'

'Is there anything in which I can serve you?'

'I wish to Heaven you could get me out of this wretched kingdom honourably. That would serve me.' The words burst from him in obedience to an irresistible impulse. 'I am sick and weary to death of it all;' and he continued his restless pacing for three lengths of the room. He stopped abruptly and threw himself into a chair close to me.

'Sit here,' he cried, pointing to the chair next him. 'I want to speak frankly to you.' He paused again, and then laying his hand on my arm said very earnestly: 'My friend, you are playing a deadly game—and, mark me, you are going to be defeated.'

'Your Highness means——?' I asked steadily.

'That your ideal is magnificent and worthy of you, full worthy of any Englishman—but impossible.'

'I am flattered to hear such words from you,' I replied cautiously, but he caught me up and answered sharply:

'For Heaven's sake, Count, don't answer me with any courtly phrasings that come tripping off the lips and mean nothing when spoken. I don't ask you for your confidence, unless you care to give it to me. I'll tell you what I know about you first.'

'The Countess Bokara has no doubt——'

'Yes, of course she has; she has told me all she knows, or guesses, or suspects, or whatever it may be. But while it was only what she said I did not think of seeing you or interfering with you. But I have learnt it now from another source—one vastly more important. And that's what I mean when I tell you that you are steering straight for the rocks and are dead certain

to be shipwrecked. Listen to me. You are in love with the Princess, and naturally enough people credit you with the intention of trying to climb into the throne by——'

'It is monstrous,' I cried, unable to keep silent.

'I hope your repudiation comes from your heart—I hope it for your own sake; for there is no happiness under such a crown as I wear, Count Benderoff,' said the Prince bitterly. 'Men think of the dazzle, the pomp, and the grandeur, the magnificence, and forget the dangers, the cares, the awful loneliness. If you seek happiness, seek it not in the glitter of a king's garb, but in the frank enjoyment of true manliness. A monarch has mighty opportunities of making others happy, but himself is doomed to sorrow and solitude. There is no solitude that this life can know half so awful in its depression as that which hedges a king. You seek advice, you find intrigue; you hunger for the truth, and they feed you with the bitter apples of flattery; you yearn for the sweet counsel of a friend, and you meet the tempered phrasings of a courtier. Your every word is weighed in the balance of your hearer's self-interest, your every thought is caught still-born and distorted, your every action is judged by the sordid standard of some intrigue, and every motive twisted and dissected, and analysed and maligned, till your very face becomes a mask to hide your mind, lest your enemies should use your looks to help the plans which their malice is spreading under your very eyes. God, it is unbearable.'

I listened in silence to this outburst.

'You wonder why I speak like this to you. I can read it in your eyes—for am I not trained to find the truth in the face and hear the lies in the voice? Well, I would warn you, and more, I would warn that good, true, noble woman whom you love. Time was when I hated her, and believed all the harm that was said of her; but now that I have learnt her real object—to act, not with, but against the bloodsuckers who seek to devour the land—I know her goodness and sincerity. But the movement must fail. The Russians know of it, General Kolfort best of all, and he has already taken his measures to thwart you all. And you will find his hand a heavy one, Count. If the Princess Christina had succeeded in gaining the throne on her own terms—I mean by means of the men you and those with you were seeking to train as her adherents—she must still have failed in her object, and have doomed herself to a lot as miserable and hopeless as mine has been. But Kolfort does not mean her to succeed; and, I warn

you, the measures of prevention will be sharp, sudden, and terrible in their severity.'

I sat amazed and disconcerted at his words.

'You wonder how I know all this, and set it down to the Countess Bokara. Of course, she has told me; but I have my news straight from General Kolfort himself. You little know Bulgaria or the Bulgarians, or you would have seen the consummate hopelessness of trying to avoid treachery. Every man you have added to your band has been a fresh centre of probable treachery. The rule here is each man for himself; and some one of the men with you was bound to ask himself in time whether he could not gain more for himself by carrying the news to the Russians than by standing true to a desperate cause like your Princess's. Some one has betrayed you; and the betrayal began when your love was known. They do not believe in disinterested love in this country, Count. The peasants may, but no one else. And when that secret leaked out, General Kolfort's task of suborning a traitor became easy enough. If I knew the scoundrel's name I would give it you, that you might cut his heart and tongue out for his cowardice. But, believe me, everything is known—everything. And your knowledge of that grim Russian leader may tell you what to expect.' He spoke with all the earnestness of a troubled friend; and I could not doubt him.

'When did your Highness learn this?' I asked after a pause.

'Yesterday. Three days ago, the General came to me with proposals that showed he had some fresh plans in mind. He was all for my remaining here as reigning Prince, and offered to concede more than half the conditions of freedom of action I had before demanded. It was a pity to disturb the country by a change of rulers; the country was thriving under my wise rule; the people were growing more contented, and the malcontents could be overawed; the advantages of my rule were appreciated in St. Petersburg, and the basis of achieving mutual ends might probably be arranged with honour to me and substantial benefit to the country; and so on for an hour or more he prated. I asked the reason for the change of tone, and he hummed and hesitated, and, in a word, lied. I said I must have time to think; and he gave me till yesterday. Last night he came with his tale prepared—that the Princess was conspiring for an end hostile to both my aims and those of Russia; that you were her right hand and had been set on by her to fight and kill the Duke Sergius, but had succeeded only in wounding him; that your plot was to use

the Russian influence to gain the throne and then yourself marry her and reign as her consort ; and to gain this end you were both prepared to throw the country into the throes of a civil war which God forbid, and so on, till I was sick to death of his intriguing slanders. I tried to lure him on to tell me what he proposed for you, but he contented himself with saying he had all but completed what I might rely upon would be effectual measures of precaution.'

'May I venture to ask how your Highness answered him?'

'How should I answer him but as I have always answered? That I would never bend the knee to Russia; that I did not believe St. Petersburg would ever sanction any such arrangement as he outlined; and that if what he stated of the objects of the Princess were true, I would be the first to abdicate in her favour and join with her in her efforts, shouldering a musket if need be, in the ranks of the men to fight for her; and that would I, Count, if I saw the faintest gleam of a hope of success. But there is not a chance, no jot or tittle of hope.'

'Now that we have been betrayed, that is.'

'Before the betrayal the chances were not one in a hundred; now they are not one in a million. There is but one course for you and for her—flight, and at once.'

'She will not desert the men who have stood by her. Nor shall I,' I answered firmly.

'As you will. The Russian preparations are all but complete; Russian troops are being hurried to the Black Sea; the slightest sign or movement on your part will be seized on as the pretext for measures as drastic as Russian measures commonly are; and you yourselves, you two in particular and all associated as leaders with you, will be treated you can guess how. Russia knows how to treat her friends badly enough; but no one ever yet accused her of not dealing effectively with her enemies. You have been blind, Count; but then a man in love is seldom anything else.'

It was useless to pretend that I was not vastly affected by what the Prince told me. I read in it ruin and worse than ruin to everything, and my heart sank at the prospect before Christina.

'Your warnings, and more, the kindly motives that have prompted them, have moved me deeply, your Highness.'

'They had better move you out of Bulgaria. But that is your personal affair. I have told you, because of the service you rendered to one who is now, I regret, your enemy.'

'Your Highness knows of the attempt on the Princess Christina's life,' I asked.

'To my shame and sorrow, I do. She must not think that I would have countenanced such a thing for a moment,' he said in a tone of deep pain.

'She does not,' I assured him.

'That you thwarted it is another service you have rendered me, which adds to my eagerness to help you both to safety. But even on the throne here I am powerless to help my friends. Ay, and even my friends are driven to inflict deeper wounds upon me than my enemies.' His manner was that of a weak, hopeless, dejected, sorrow-broken man. 'You have spoken of that deed, and I will tell you. Since I knew of it, I have refused to see the Countess. I cannot see her again; and I learn that in the mad hope of helping my fallen cause she has been in communication with Kolfort, leading him to think that I could be induced to remain here. And I declare to you, Count, I do not pass an hour, day or night, that is not care-ridden by the fear of some yet more desperate deed she may attempt—the consequences of which must fall on my head. Every step she takes adds either to my danger or my disrepute. And I can do nothing.' He wrung his hands in weak unavailing despair.

I rose to leave; and, looking up half-eagerly, he asked:

'And will the British Government do nothing?' The question was so absolutely inconsequential, and suggested motives behind it so utterly at variance with his attitude and words, that I was surprised. At one moment he was declaiming against the miseries of his position, and yet now he was clinging to the throne, like a drowning man to a spar, with a vague reasonless hope that even England would risk a war with Russia to maintain him upon it.

'I have not the remotest right to say a word on that matter, your Highness; but personally I do not think for a moment that any interference can be looked for.'

'Then all is indeed lost!' he exclaimed, throwing up his hands, and sighing heavily. 'Farewell, Count, let it be farewell; and do your utmost to snatch that brave girl you love from the ruin that threatens to overwhelm her.'

I needed no words of his to spur me to such an effort, and as soon as I left the palace, in grievous trouble at all that I had heard, I sent a message for Zoiloff to come to me at once, and hurried

home to try and strike out some line of action to meet this most dire emergency.

My impulse was to fight—to strike our blow without a day's delay; to take the Prince at his word—if he had meant it; to get him to abdicate on the very next day, and have the Princess proclaimed ruler in his stead. Our preparations were not ready, and the *coup* would be much less effective than if we could have had time to complete everything. But then neither was General Kolfort. He had not openly abandoned Christina's cause, and might be half afraid to oppose her, if once on the throne, and without the aid of the troops which the Prince had told me were being hurried up to his support. For him to cause a civil war was to take a step in the face of Europe which might cost him dear, and force the other Powers to interfere—the one step that Russia dreaded.

Unprepared as we were, and much as we had to gain by a few days' delay, Kolfort had much more to gain. When once his grip had tightened in the way he projected, there would not remain a vestige of hope for us. Clearly, then, if we meant to fight, we must do it at once.

It must be fight or flight.

In regard to the latter, I found Markov had returned, and he assured me he had carried out my plans to the letter—had even improved upon them, for he had told me he had arranged for the last stage of the journey to be by a very slightly known route to the frontier.

'I did this,' he explained, 'because I heard rumours of certain changes as to the guardianship of the frontier roads, and I thought it well to choose the route which would be the least difficult in case of trouble.'

'You have done well, Markov, and have earned your reward,' I said.

'You will let me stay with you to the last, my lord?' he asked.

'I wish it above all things, for I need faithful men about me.'

When Zoiloff came I explained my views, putting bluntly the alternative of fight or flight, and he was all for fighting. But he shook his head gloomily at the chances.

'We have left to the last the most hazardous work of all,' he said, 'and yet in some respects the most important. I mean the winning over of some of those men, the politicians, the men of tongues not deeds, whose names are most before the public. They

are the most dangerous of all to meddle with, and yet without them I fear for the result. And we cannot draw them to us until we can show that the army is on our side.'

'And what of the army?'

'We have done all that human effort could achieve in the time—but we could not do impossibilities. On the troops in Philippopoli I believe we can count surely. General Montkouroff is Bulgarian to the core, and where he leads the majors will follow. He has been sounded and will act with us. But here in Sofia there is not a regiment, except that to which I and Spernow belong, which would not turn against us. This disposition of the troops has all been arranged by Russia and the traitors who are Russia's friends. The risk is tremendous.'

'There is no alternative but flight, remember.'

'And fly I will not. Come what may, we will strike.'

'If the Princess will,' said I. 'We must see her at once.' And in this mood we started for her house, Zoiloff urging me on the way to see her alone.

'You have more influence with her than all of us put together,' he said quickly. 'I will remain at hand, and you can call me in if you cannot prevail. But you are right, Count, and I am with you hand and heart. We must either strike an imperfect blow at once or abandon everything.'

CHAPTER XXII.

THE HOUR OF INDECISION.

My anticipations of the interview with Christina were a mingling of pleasure and apprehension. I was longing to see her. I had not set eyes on her for four days, and, busily as the time had been filled, my thoughts had been constantly with her. I recalled, too, with a feeling of mixed tenderness and pain, how she had then said we must not meet again alone, and at the recollection my pulses thrilled again with the sad sweetness of our acknowledged but never to be avowed love.

The knowledge of her present danger moved me deeply. I had to tell her the ill news myself, and, in telling it, to urge her to take the course which I knew must put an impassable gulf between us. It had been easy enough for me, in consultation with

Zoiloff, when we were both staggered by this new development, to decide for the counsel of energy and to choose the course which, while loyal to Christina, my Princess, was traitor to Christina, my love. But if she would fly the country, there would be no longer the barrier of a throne between us.

And in the minutes I was alone waiting for her coming, the thought of all I was to lose in losing her, and of all I was to gain if she would consent to flight, threatened to make a coward of me and urged me to plead with all a lover's strength that she should choose the course which would make her my wife. Away from her I could be the impassionate adviser, but in her presence, with the light of her eyes upon my face, with my heart glowing and throbbing with the knowledge of my love for her and hers for me, it would be hard to be more than a lover, and, being that, not to set the hopes and desires of our love beyond all other considerations.

I had to wait some minutes for her; and, as they passed, the struggle grew fiercer, the temptation strengthened, and the fear of losing her waxed until I was almost impelled to call in Zoiloff to prop my stumbling resolve. There were so many arguments to favour flight. The road was still open; the means were instantly available; safety could be won in a few hours—long before this Russian tyrant could strike; the Prince had counselled, even urged it; the Russian captain had done the same; all were convinced that safety could lie in no other course.

And if we struck and failed, what outlook was there but humiliation, ill-usage, a prison, and possibly death? Love was calling to us both on that frontier road, and smiling with the promise of a life of rare delight; and here in the city stood the gaunt shadow of menacing defeat, with all its grim terrors and gloomy threats of ruthless indignity, and quenchless, loveless sorrow and separation. Is it to be wondered at that I hearkened for the moment to the whispering invitation of love, and closed my ears to aught beside?

But before she came I had fought it back, thrusting the temptation away from me as a thing dishonourable and unclean, and I rose to greet her with a heart as full of loyalty as of love. She was looking sad and troubled, and she bowed to me merely, not giving me her hand as on former visits.

'I had not thought that we should be alone again, Count Benderoff,' she said a little formally; and I hoped I could detect in this reception and in the light of her eyes when they fell upon me the sight of a personal feeling of pleasure that needed to be held

firmly in check. I adopted a tone of formality that equalled her own.

'I had not forgotten your wish, Princess, but I have been compelled by grave circumstances to come to you thus. Have you heard any news? Your anxious looks suggest that you may know what I have to tell.'

'I have heard nothing. Is there bad news?'

'I grieve to say it is of the worst.'

'This time, at least, you are the bearer of it,' she replied, smiling faintly. 'And I can trust you to tell me frankly. What is it?'

I told her plainly everything. First, the warning which the Russian officer, Captain Wolasky, had given me on the previous evening; and his strong advice that she should fly before it was too late. Then, in great detail, all that had passed between the Prince and myself that morning.

She was very pale and much agitated as my narrative proceeded; but she interrupted me scarcely once, and at the close sank back in her seat, and with her hands across her eyes remained buried in thought.

'It is hard news to hear,' she said despondently. 'You say it spells the ruin of everything.'

'It is to the full as hard for me to tell as for you to hear,' I answered gently. 'But it is no moment to flinch from the facts, however ugly. I fear it means the ruin of everything.' At my gloomy words she shuddered, and sat for some minutes silent in dismay. When she turned her face to me, it was so full of anguish and pain that it made my heart ache.

'How can I save those whom I have involved in this?'

'We are thinking of you, Princess,' I answered.

'Oh no, no, not of me!' she exclaimed vehemently. 'For myself I care nothing. Heaven knows, my motives have not been inspired by mere personal ambition. I do not crave a throne, but I have longed, with a passion I cannot perhaps make you feel, to spread the blessing of freedom among the people. For this end I have striven; and now it seems I have failed. Do not think of me. I will not think of myself. But to bring others to ruin is more than I can endure. Tell me—what do you advise? What can I do?'

'There seem but two courses open,' I said, and told her what Zoloff and I had agreed together.

'You did not think that I would fly and leave those who have

rallied to my cause to bear the brunt while I was seeking the coward's refuge of safety?' she asked, half indignant that I should even have suggested it.

'No, I did not,' I answered quietly; 'I knew you;' and her eyes thanked me for the words. 'I should remind you, too, that this check has come so suddenly and prematurely for our plans that there are very few who are really involved in any danger. We have barely had time to throw off the veil of Russia's sanction of our efforts, so that there are scarcely more than a handful of us who know the real object of the scheme; and General Kolfort would be unable to bring home even to them any acts against Russia. It is he who has encouraged the plans laid "In the name of a Woman," and his own writing is in evidence to prove it. You will remember my early insistence upon the necessity for obtaining his written sanction. In the face of that I do not see that he could produce proofs to convict any one except our trusty Zoiloff and Spernow, and say two or three others.'

'But yourself?' she cried, in a tone of quick alarm.

'I do not regard the consequences to myself as very serious, Princess,' I said calmly.

'I shall not run away,' she said, taking what I said as an argument in favour of her seeking her own safety, and she paused again to think. 'Could I go myself to General Kolfort; give up everything on condition of his visiting it all on me? I am responsible.'

It was a true woman's offer, and a noble one; but I shook my head.

'I fear it would be hopeless. He would but drag from you all that you could tell him, and then use the information remorselessly, and without a scruple, against those implicated. You would do the very thing you seek to avoid.' Her face fell as she saw the truth of this, and she sighed heavily.

'But this alternative—what is it but a wild forlorn hope? A desperate step with scarce a chance of success? May not the consequences be a thousandfold worse than the worst that can come of doing nothing? Have you thought of what would happen if we failed? You said just now that so far only a few are openly embroiled; but should we not be forcing each man to declare himself, and would not each be marked out plainly as a target for Russian malice?'

'There is the hope of success, even if it be forlorn. There are many of us who think it better to fight and fail than not to fight at all.'

'I do not like it; I am afraid of it. The chances are so few; the risks so enormous to others. I dare not sanction it.'

'We are men; the cause is a noble one; enthusiasm has spread everywhere, and a lesser spirit has ere now led a feebleness movement to success. There is not one of us, I believe, who would stand back in fear.'

'There may be bloodshed,' she cried.

'Much blood has already been shed in the cause of oppression. We must think of the end, not the means. A bold stroke here will bring the army in the south to your standard—and that may do everything.'

'It is a momentous decision to have to make. I cannot make it. I must have time to think.'

'Every hour that delays the decision may turn the balance between success and failure.'

'If I thought we could triumph!' she cried, her eyes flashing and her cheeks glowing for a moment. But she paused, the light died out as quickly as it had come, and she shook her head mournfully. 'I must have time.'

'Let me send for Captain Zoiloff. Hear him.'

'Do you think he can persuade me where you fail, Count?' she asked, her eyes burning again, but with a different emotion.

'At least I would have you hear him, Princess,' I said, dropping my eyes and speaking as evenly as I could command my voice.

While he was sent for I stood in silence, and when he came I told him briefly what had passed. He spoke strongly and bluntly like the sturdy fellow he was; but he could not prevail any more than I, and he left the room rather abruptly.

The Princess looked after him with an expression of the deepest pain, and when she turned again to me I saw the tears standing in her eyes, and her voice was all unsteady as she cried from her heart:

'Does he think I would not do this if I dared?' And throwing herself back in her seat, she pressed her hands to her face, quite overcome with the strain of her emotions.

I waited in much embarrassment, uncertain whether to go or stay. Some moments passed in this tense silence, and then, to my surprise, she turned upon me with some indignation.

'Why did you bring him here to humiliate me like this? Does it give you pleasure to stay and witness my weakness—or what you deem weakness? Cannot you understand what I feel? Is everything to yield place to ambition, and are the dictates of

humanity nothing to you? Cannot you see what I am suffering, torn in this way by the distracting doubts of such a crisis? Do you think these tears are not as hard for me to shed as the blood of others as innocent of wrong as God knows I am? Why do you plague me until I—— Oh, forgive me my wild words! I don't know what I am saying.' And she passed in a breath from indignation to lament.

'Permit me to leave you now, Princess,' I murmured.

'Would you also leave me in anger? Have I no friend staunch enough to bear with my moods, or true enough to understand me? Yes, Count Benderoff, if you wish to go the way is open to you.' And, rising, she stood erect and proud, and made me a stately bow as of dismissal. 'I can decide and act alone, if need be.' Yet in the very moment of her passing indignation her lip quivered and her breath was tremulous.

'As God is my judge, I have no thought but for you!' I cried, with a rush of passion at the sight of her trouble, and I threw myself on my knee before her. 'Tell me how you wish me to act, and when I have failed reproach me with want of staunchness, but not till then.'

My voice was hoarse and broken.

As I knelt I could hear the quick catches in her breath as she stood over me, and the very rustling of the trembling laces of her dress seemed to speak to me of her sufferings.

'I have wronged you, or worse—I have insulted you, Count. Ah, me! I who know so well how you are indeed my friend! Do not kneel to me. It is I who should kneel to you.' And at that her hand, fevered and trembling, was laid gently in mine, as if to raise me to my feet.

I kissed the fingers, the tender grace of her words of contrition almost unmanning me, and driving out all thought but of my love and my desire to comfort her. I rose, and, still holding her hand, gazed into her eyes, which shone on me through the dew of her tears in a smile of loving confidence.

'I trust you wholly,' she whispered. 'Help me to do right.'

'If I were thinking of myself, I would urge you with every means in my power to fly,' I said in low rapid accents of passion.

'No, no, you must not counsel that,' she cried vehemently. 'We must not, dare not, think of ourselves. Spare me that temptation.'

'You cannot stay here and be safe unless we make this desperate venture.'

'And the world would say I ran away because I feared for my safety, betraying all who have sought to help my cause; or else that I fled to——' She paused, her face aflame with sudden blushes. 'You would not have me do that?'

'You are my world,' I answered recklessly. 'Listen one moment. In our hearts we all know, Zoiloff as well as any, that the cause is lost. Till I fired him again—knowing how you would shrink from flight—he was saturated with hopelessness. When he heard the ill news, his one thought was how you could be saved. That is the thought of us all. The way to the frontier is still open. I have ready at instant command the means of securing your safety. If you will go, I will stay to check the slanderous tongues whose malice you dread. If you bid me I will never see you again. But for God's sake, I implore you, leave me at least the solace that you are safe.'

The words moved her so that for a while she could not speak, but the clasp of her hand tightened on mine. Then she asked tenderly:

'Do you think the woman in me would know a moment's happiness if you were in danger?'

'Then let it be a woman's decision,' I urged passionately, carried away by the love in her voice. 'Life is all before us.'

'No. It cannot be. Cannot. Must not,' and she shook her head and shuddered. 'You know what this temptation must be to me. Do not urge it. I cannot listen. I dare not yield. I beg you be merciful,' she pleaded.

'Then fly and let me remain,' I said.

'The Princess cannot and must not go.' The words came all reluctantly, but were firmly spoken. I saw my pleading of love was to fail, and my heart sank. 'But you must fly!'

'Christina!' The name slipped in protest from my lips before I thought, and I feared she would resent it; and I felt her hand start.

'That is the hardest plea of all you have used,' she said softly, with a smile of rare sweetness. 'Christina is powerless to resist you, but the Princess must decide this. Do not use that plea again.'

'I must—I cannot lose you,' I cried desperately, 'I love you so.'

'Don't, please, please don't. If I dared to think of myself there would be no gladder fugitive under heaven's bright sky than Christina. There, I have bared my heart to you, as I never

thought to open it. And by the love I know you have for me, and by the love that answers it in my heart, I entreat you help me to be strong enough to resist you. Let us never have to think that we placed our love before our duty—however hard and stern. Lend me your man's strength; I need it so sorely.' And with a little piteous action of entreaty she placed her other hand on mine, and gazed full into my eyes.

I stood fighting down my wildly roused passion, trembling under its stress like a child, till I conquered it.

'It shall be as you wish,' I said at length. 'We will stay and face this together. But you must not ask me again to desert you.'

'There is a higher happiness than is bounded by our own wishes only,' she whispered.

'I can know no sorrow deeper than my loss of you. But it shall be as my Princess desires;' and I bent and kissed her hands again.

'The sorrow should be the lighter if divided,' she whispered, with a tender reproach for the selfishness of my words.

'The thought made me a coward for the moment. And no man should be a coward whose ears have been blessed by the words which you have spoken, and the knowledge I have gained. Forgive the cowardice.'

'I would I could as easily spare you the sorrow,' she murmured.

'To do that now would be to rob my life of its one great happiness. Come what may for me, I shall never love again;' and with that assurance, which brought all the love in her heart in a rush of eloquent, speaking tenderness to her eyes, I left her, caring little indeed what might happen to me if our union were impossible.

(To be continued.)

At the Sign of the Ship.

THE People is becoming literary, if we may judge by Mr. A. H. Millar's articles in *The People's Friend*, a serial published at Dundee. But recently Mr. Millar discovered that Omar Khayyam, the Persian astronomer of the eleventh century, did not write the poems usually quoted as Omar's. Omar and Homer are in the same condemnation; the works of both were the works of somebody else. As to Omar, as far as his quatrains have merit, I attribute it to the late Mr. Edward Fitzgerald, the friend of Tennyson. Not being a Persian scholar, I do not pretend to know (or care much) what Persian, or Persians, wrote the original Eastern meditations on which Mr. Fitzgerald based his little volume. I have long admired it, but the thing has been so overdone that I wish to hear no more of it than Dr. Johnson desired to hear about the Punic War.

* * *

To make up for depriving Omar of his poetry, Mr. Millar now finds that John Gibson Lockhart (the biographer of Scott) wrote a book of which my ignorance never heard before, *The Fudge Family in Edinburgh* (1820). It was in 1818 that Moore published *The Fudge Family in Paris* (Longmans), a work which was popular and is now not much known. Obviously Moore, who had never been in Scotland, did not write on the Fudges in Edinburgh. The author must have been a dweller in that town; he imitated Moore and he dealt in personalities. To these Lockhart was then addicted; he was also a clever parodist, and so far there is nothing against the claim urged by Mr. Millar. Lockhart, in 1819, had written the still interesting work on Edinburgh and its citizens, *Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk*. Not having seen the Fudge book, I cannot corroborate Mr. Millar's theory that it contains things about Scott not likely to be generally known. It is no proof that the author attributes *Ivanhoe* to Sir Walter,

for few sane people doubted that *Ivanhoe* was his. Perhaps only a score of people *knew* the secret, but there were not many who did not take it for granted; at least, so I believe. Mr. Millar thinks that Scott's authorship 'was not generally accepted.' The reverse is my own opinion. The author of the *Fudges*, if not Lockhart, had Lockhart's *Peter's Letters* as a model; so that resemblances may be discounted. The book is really more or less based on Smollett's *Humphrey Clinker*. There is the religious, amorous aunt, the letter-writing servants, and so forth. Had Lockhart written the *Fudges*, he would, *more suo*, have taken care that it was well reviewed in *Blackwood*. I am not aware that it was noticed by *Ebony*. It would have been unwise in Lockhart to cover in verse so much of the ground which he had just covered in prose. When writing his *Life*, I found no reference of any sort to these Edinburgh *Fudges*. On the whole, as far as one can say without reading the book, I think it unlikely that Lockhart was the author. Anybody with a turn for imitation might have done the work, as far as extracts enable us to decide. Hogg could have done the thing easily, though I do not suppose that he did.

* *

In Sir George Douglas's little book on Hogg reference is made to a theory which once attracted me, that Lockhart had a hand in Hogg's *Confessions of a Justified Sinner*. I do not maintain the theory, yet cannot agree with Sir George Douglas when he says that 'of Hogg's genius Lockhart had nothing.' Surely *Adam Blair* is at least on as high a level as any prose fiction by Hogg! The circumstance that the manuscript of the *Sinner* is entirely in Hogg's hand proves nothing. Hogg wanted Lockhart to write the *Life of Scott* in his (the Shepherd's) manner, and offered to copy the manuscript to keep up the hoax. Though angry with Hogg about his *Domestic Manners of Sir Walter Scott*, Lockhart did not reveal this amazing proposal. It was an age of literary mystifications, to which Hogg was prone, as his suggestion proves. Therefore the manuscript of a work of disputed authorship would not be of value as evidence. But I feel convinced that the Shepherd did write his own wild masterpiece about the Justified Sinner—a work never popular, in spite of its remarkable and original qualities. In places, and especially in the passage about the Sinner's suicide, the work resembles Mr. Stevenson's manner, especially in his admirable *Thravn Janet*. But Hogg drew no characters that live like Allan Breck, Barbara Grant,

and the Chevalier Bourke. Sir George Douglas appears to think that Mr. Stevenson could not create characters, while Hogg 'can generally place a personality before his reader.' Well, there is no disputing about tastes. If John Silver, Miss Grant, Allan, the Chevalier, and James Mor Macgregor are not placed before Sir George, they are certainly placed before me and many other grateful students. Hogg may have been as successful, but with the exception of the *Sinner* I have not hitherto been able to read his novels. He *may* have written better ghost stories than *Wandering Willie's Tale* and *Thrawn Janet*: if so, he has been most unrighteously neglected. Indeed, he has been neglected. In Mr. Ward's four volumes of selections from British poets, but one little lyric of the Shepherd's is included: although the selector, in his case, was a kindly Scot, I wish that somebody more scholarly had edited the *Jacobite Relics*, an entertaining but not a trustworthy miscellany. But people were not particular in those days, and Hogg was not a Gaelic scholar, though 'the most extraordinary man that ever wore the maud of a shepherd.' Hogg had a splendid genius for being happy—the least usual kind of genius in poets. His faults were as superficial as they were eccentric: there was no guile in the Shepherd, not a black drop of blood in that big body of his. This is more important than the truth would be of the extraordinary remark that 'James Hogg had probably as good a claim' as Scott 'to gentle blood.' This appears to have been the late Mr. Veitch's opinion; but where are James's quarterings? What do we know about his eponymous hero 'Haug, a more or less mythic Viking'? Of course Hogg *may* be Haig, and the Haigs of Bemersyde are renowned for the antiquity of their house. But the identity needs a deal of proving.

* . *

One of these Haigs, about 1618, tried to involve his own brother in a charge of treason and magic, offering to prove his case in trial by combat. This unutterable scoundrel came to no good end, and is much at the service of any historical novelist in search of a villain. His case reminds me to mention that the prophet who accidentally brought the Lyon Herald to the stake in 1569 (as narrated in the last voyage of this SHIP) may have been the inventor of logarithms, Napier of Merchistoun. At least, Queen Mary's secretary, Claude Nau, says that Napier did prophesy her escape from Loch Leven, and offered to lay five hundred crowns

on his opinion. There were 'no takers.' Napier did certainly enter into a bond or covenant to find a quantity of treasure, 'by arts to him known,' for another laird. But the bargain did not hold, apparently because Napier was not sure that his friend would give him half profits in a fair and honourable manner. Even a royalty on his book of logarithms would have been more valuable than a Scottish treasure; these were 'sma' sums,' as Bailie Nicol Jarvie says.

* * *

To recommend a novel in this day is to discharge a perilous duty. Still, I venture to hope that many people will be no less entertained than myself by Mr. Wells's *Love and Mr. Lewisham*. For Mr. Wells's apocalyptic and extra-natural romances about Mars and the future I do not greatly care. But Mr. Lewisham is an interesting study of an ambitious scientific student hardly pressed in the conflict between his affection and his career. The heroine, too, falls in love in a nice and natural way; they are both so young and so unlucky that the heart bleeds for them. Mr. Chaffery, the heroine's stepfather, is too clever for a professional medium with forty-four methods of rapping, ten of them his own invention. To be made acquainted with even one method, beyond dislocating the joint of the knee, would be pleasing to me. Of course, I do not count mere thumping the table or floor with a stick. The accomplishment, well done, is rare; the heel of a slipper caused the only raps that I ever heard, and nobody was beguiled. Mr. Chaffery is quite as clever, if not quite so gay, as our old friend Captain Wragge in *No Name*. The Psychical Researcher is rather old-fashioned; nowadays he would detect Mr. Chaffery—these people are always being detected. The life of students at scientific lectures in South Kensington is interesting, and is a new field, with glimpses of romance. Altogether, though not exhilarating perhaps, *Love and Mr. Lewisham* is a book that may be recommended to a friend.

* * *

Tennyson was born to be the delight of all men (except extremely superior persons), and to be the joy of editors. Mr. Churton Collins must have found it a pleasant task to edit the 'Early Poems' (Methuen). No English poet, probably, made so many alterations, large and small, in his verses as Tennyson. Certainly no one profited so much by criticism. Mr. Collins has

printed the old original versions, the things at which Lockhart laughed, in 1833.

Dark-brow'd sophist, come not a-near,
All the place is holy ground;
Hollow smile and frozen sneer
Come not here.

So Tennyson had warned reviewers, but the dark-browed sophist did come, and was amusing indeed over the faults which the poet corrected later. The strange thing was that Lockhart, a poet himself, in his moods, and an early appreciator of Wordsworth, noticed nothing but faults in the Tennyson of 1833. As we turn over the Early Poems in Mr. Collins's edition, we cannot too much admire the blindness or the prejudice which failed to recognise their extraordinary and original merits. The earliest piece, probably of 1830, 'Chorus in an unpublished drama written very early,' already contains two of the Laureate's favourite words, 'windy' and 'sallow.'

The mountains are riven

By secret fire and midnight storms
That wander round their *windy* cones.

We read of

The troublous autumn's *sallow* gloom.

Already the boy was picking and choosing his descriptive words, and finding his way to his own style. Even in the poems of 1830 there are but the faintest traces of imitation. 'Mariana' is already a masterpiece. Now let any of the many young poets who ought to peruse this page look through his own verses and candidly ask himself whether they are not the songs of the mocking-bird. If he does not find imitation throughout his rhymes, then he may flatter himself with hopes. At his age, say from twenty to twenty-five (when we all rhyme), I was perfectly well aware that I was a mere mocking-bird, and never dreamed of taking my effusions at a higher rate than mankind esteems amateur drawings in water-colour. Many a disappointment would be avoided by the young minstrel who can face the question, 'Am I original?' Tennyson was original, on the whole. Mr. Collins sees traces of Coleridge; to me they are not very apparent; more apparent is a kind of Leigh Huntishness in the affectations. In one way, of course, Tennyson was voluntarily and consciously imitative—namely, in the re-cutting and re-setting of gems from

the Greek, Latin, and Italian poets. Mr. Collins notices a number of examples in a way instructive to lettered readers. One parallel he omits, in the lines to J. S. :

His memory long will live alone
In all our hearts, as mournful light
That broods above the fallen sun,
And dwells in heaven half the night.

Mr. Collins suggests a parallel in Henry Vaughan's 'Beyond the Veil.' But the stanza, by coincidence or design, is merely a versification of a speech by Claverhouse in *Old Mortality*. I have not the novel by me, but the words occur in a conversation between Morton and Claverhouse, after the battle of Bothwell Bridge.

* * *

I can fancy a later editor making a conjectural emendation in 'Mariana :'

. . . the mouse
Behind the mouldering wainscot *shriek'd*.

The new editor will read 'squeak'd.' Mice, like ghosts in Shakespeare, squeak; they do not shriek. And it rhymes! An eminent Homeric editor corrects Shakespeare's

Hey, the doxy over the dale!

The language, like that of Mr. Toots's Chicken, is coarse, and the meaning is obscure. Read, therefore,

When crocuses begin to peer
And *chionodoxa* over the dale,

chionodoxa being a flower of the vernal season. However, Mr. Collins has not yet arrived at conjectural emendations. I hope he is wrong in thinking that 'Cenone' was perhaps suggested by Beattie's 'Judgment of Paris.' This is an unexpected compliment to Forbes's Minstrel's shade, in an age that has forgotten the once admired Dr. Beattie.

* * *

It is a wild conjecture perhaps, but when Tennyson wrote of

The blind wave feeling round his long sea-hall
In silence,

I doubt if he merely 'unfolded' the Homeric *κῦμα κωφόν*; perhaps he had the blinded Cyclops of the *Odyssey*, feeling round his cave, in his mind.

* * *

Mr. Collins has suffered a good deal from his printers. *L'art pour art* is a cruel *coquille*; and, even if Rossetti was a 'mere æsthete,' it is too severe to call him 'Rossetti.' It does appear quaint to praise 'The Vision of Sin' as 'worth a hundred sermons on the disastrous effects of unbridled profligacy.' A profligate, at least if unbridled, is very unlikely to read 'The Vision of Sin,' or to understand it if he does. Like a young lady of Mr. Anstey's, the profligate thinks poetry 'such *footle*, you know.' But the unbridled profligate is just the man to be influenced by a good, rousing, plain spoken sermon about his future prospects. A line in the 'Vision' is connected with an anecdote that throws a ghastly light on the scientific mind:

God made Himself an awful rose of dawn.

Professor Tyndall says that he 'once asked Tennyson for some explanation of this line.' To the non-scientific intellect explanation seems superfluous. If Professor Tyndall did not understand, a wilderness of scholiasts could not enlighten him. Poets do not write for students who need notes like this of Mr. Collins:

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls.

'One of Tennyson's most magically descriptive lines; nothing could exceed the vividness of the words "wrinkled" and "crawls" here.' One is reminded of the words 'this Turk' in 'The Ballad of Lord Bateman,' and of the note in which Thackeray expounds the hidden but Shakespearian charms of the phrase. People ought to make acquaintance with the poets in unannotated editions, and then, if they want the learning, seek unto editors. The research of Mr. Collins has been rewarded by the discovery of the Lincolnshire variant of the Brownie who flitted with the farmer. The Lincolnshire word for Brownie is Hob-thrush. The word puzzles an amateur philologist. The same sort of attached Brownie followed Donald Ban (who fought at Culloden), and indeed is heard of in most countries, as Mr. Collins observes. The most recent instance known to me occurred in Brompton within the last twenty years. Mr. Collins's book is most valuable to the lover of poetry who, knowing Tennyson already, is curious

about his innumerable 'sources' and his ceaseless emendations and alterations. When the Idylls come to be edited, then indeed the toil fairly begins, for the learning of the subject is vast, chaotic, and for the most part set forth in the German language.

* * *

I confess to being almost an extreme Tennysonian, who do not like to hear a word said against the poet. The plays, of course, are, in his case, not 'the thing,' and I could hand over the 'May Queen,' with 'that good man, the clergyman,' to the tormentors. A certain fatuity in the poet's lovers (as in 'Love and Duty' and in the Lord of Burleigh) vexes me, and other disagreeable things no doubt may be said. But I cannot quite agree with Mr. Collins that Tennyson 'appears to have been constitutionally deficient in what the Greeks called *architektoniké*, combination and disposition on a large scale.' In 1838 he wrote, 'If I meant to make any mark at all, it must be by shortness, for the men before me had been so diffuse, and most of the big things, except King Arthur, had been done.' Edgar Poe said that there is no such thing as a long poem, and it is at least true that there is now no such thing as reading a long poem. They suited times of leisure. Theocritus, like Tennyson, found that people would no longer read long new poems; so, like Tennyson, he wrote brief idylls. In another kind of age Tennyson might have shown *architektoniké* enough. But, frankly, it would no longer pay.

* * *

By 1845, when he was thirty-six, Tennyson had become the recipient of the other poets' poems. 'Rascals send me theirs per post from America . . . books of which I can't get through one page, for of all books the most insipid reading is second-rate verse.' Coleridge and Wordsworth could not read Tennyson: they were too old, he was too young. Very soon he was to feel like them: almost every book of verse flew straight at him, like a moth into a candle, though I suppose that such books as Mr. Matthew Arnold's did not automatically assail him. Mr. Browning's arrived quite late, from Mrs. Browning. Nothing is so likely to 'put down' a recognised poet as to flop a book heavily down in front of him. You might as well throw a fly with a heavy splash at a wary old trout. Tennyson's friends cast his verses as lightly as possible over Coleridge and Wordsworth, but

these old fish hardly looked up at the lure. This is a lesson for young authors. I fear that tickling, not fair fishing—tickling by judicious flattery—is the way to catch the big fish. Praise them; do not try to get them to praise you. That may come later, but the recognised bard swims away when ever so pretty a little book of rhyme is presented to him. He has seen so many! A trout in the Test has been known to rush off with every sign of terror when a real ‘olive dun’ floated near him. Even *real* poetry—Tennyson’s—alarmed Coleridge and Wordsworth. Of course there are exceptions. Southey and Scott used to look at presentation copies, and praise the donors. Mr. Browning, I have been told, was equally good-natured. Perhaps our modern poets rise freely at presentation copies from beginners. On the whole, however, the plan of tickling seems decidedly the likeliest way of catching your poet. ‘What I particularly liked about him is that he did not press on me any verses of his own,’ so Tennyson wrote about Mr. Swinburne in 1858. Mr. Swinburne must have been quite a boy in 1858, but he was wiser than many much older poets.

ANDREW LANG.

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